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LETTERS

views of Thomas

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Richard J. Walton, in his review of W.A. Swanberg's *Norman Thomas: The Last Idealist* [*The Nation*, Jan. 22], is guilty of adding to past and present so-called leftist lies about Norman Thomas when he repeats the canard that Thomas "contributed to the national hysteria that got us on the road to Vietnam, a war he later (*sic*) opposed vigorously despite illness and advanced old age. . . ."

No informed person should take seriously such allegations. . . . How, by being a pacifist and opposing all wars all his life, could he contribute to any war? *Kenneth Boss*
Local Chairperson and Eastern Coordinator of the Socialist Party, U.S.A.

Newton, Conn.

Roger Baldwin's measured comment on my *Norman Thomas* makes sense, as he always does, but Richard J. Walton has me reeling. It's a great book, he seems to say, but a terrible book. It's fascinating, but reads too much like a campaign biography. ". . . it is a tribute not a biography," he says.

Then Walton goes on to rip Thomas up and down and through the middle because Thomas was not as far to the Left as Walton is, but to assert in extenuation that the book

> . . . captures superbly one of the authentically great—and good—men of our time. No *Nation* reader needs to be reminded of Thomas's good works, nor of his political and physical courage, nor, most impressive, his extraordinary stamina. For a half century . . . Thomas was on the front line of more good causes than seems possible for one man, or even a dozen. . . . [Thomas was] one of the most useful men in our history.

I confess a partiality for the man. But Mr. Walton, I think you're almost as bad as I am. *W. A. Swanberg*

Lincoln University, Pa.

Walton correctly cites Swanberg for his failure to deal critically with Thomas's cooperation with anti-Communists and other pro-McCarthyite elements in the cold-war era. But in all fairness to Thomas, one must draw a distinction between his opposition to Communists and that of the paranoid right-wing element in the Socialist Party. I cite as one example, but a significant one, the following letter by Norman Thomas to George Steinhardt, July 21, 1933. . . .

> Almost a year ago I made up my mind not to run for Mayor. . . . I might take all the risks for the sake of the Party and its morale if the internal situation were different. The Party in New York officially has shown both by the action and lack of action of its Labor Committee and more recently by its action in the Furriers case that it is willing to give blind support to A.F. of L. leaders or groups no matter what tactics they use against, let us say, the Communists. I am as much opposed to Communist tactics as any man but when we approve or condone the use of Tammany fixers and of injunctions virtually directed against another union, as in the Furriers case, we make our talk of class solidarity and of democratic methods plain hypocrisy. How can we trust ourselves under these circumstances to do what needs doing in the Labor Movement or in the City Hall?

This in all fairness should also be part of the record.
Philip S. Foner, Professor of History
Lincoln University

New York City

To Mr. Boss I can only say that his loyalty to his friend

(*Continued on page 198*)

EDITORIALS

Caught in the Ice

The American economy is moving ahead, if that is the word, as slowly as an ice-choked river full of spilled oil. And the same glacial pace characterizes the measures to stimulate it that are drifting from the White House and the Executive Office Building down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol.

This absence of a sense of urgency has a rationale, of course, even a theoretical structure. It holds that about all the federal government can do is encourage a "climate" that will encourage business to do its thing at its regular stand in the marketplace. President Carter never promised much more than that during his long campaign, so there is no reason to feel deceived. His experience as a self-made businessman had more influence on his thinking than his few years in the Navy. The question is, how long will he be willing to put up with the sluggish performance of the corporate world before he gives up on it and turns to a much higher rate of public, or social, spending.

There is no sign that such a change of attitude is even in the offing; American business long ago established the paradoxical truth that we can have huge unemployment, and thus a very underheated economy, along with booming inflation. The Carter technique of dealing with that unpleasant phenomenon is something called "prenotification" (of proposed price increases).

This variation on old-fashioned "jawboning," which meant loud criticism by the President of oligopolistic price-hiking, takes place discreetly behind closed doors. It is said by Carter's men to produce miraculous results, such as Big Steel's agreement with a tickled Bert Lance of the Office of Management and Budget to cut a planned rise in tin plate prices back to a mere 4.8 per cent, as compared to the 6 per cent jump in flat-rolled steel prices which the barons of Pittsburgh boldly imposed during the interregnum between Ford and Carter.

Meanwhile, and with utter predictability, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns rumbles to Congress that "the economy is improving on its own" and he doubts that "any stimulus is needed at all." When Prof. James Tobin of Yale, a rather disillusioned veteran of Kennedy's Keynesian efforts to end the slump he inherited, charged the Fed with mismanaging the money supply and thus offsetting the effect of the 1975 tax rebate, all Burns could offer was an involved and lame excuse for that *gaffe*. It was a mistake, even judged on technical grounds, but it shows the power of the central bank to frustrate the will of Congress.

There are few signs, to continue this bleak account, that the combination of White House and Congress will avoid the errors grimly forecast by Robert Lekachman in this magazine two months ago ("Carter and the Tax Cut Soothsayers," December 18). Lekachman saw the pre-Inauguration drift of things as leading to a "shortage of federal cash" for necessary national purposes, a "shrinkage of the revenues essential" to the financing of "any liberal agenda that Jimmy Carter carries with him.

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That agenda may still be in his pocket, but it does not yet seem to be on his desk.

The President has said that he wants a certain amount of government stimulus applied to the lagging economy, but the numbers so far mentioned are woefully low (about half, for example, the level of the JFK stimulative tax cut that took effect in 1964, if adjusted for comparative price levels). And the conventional wisdom, which may be right this time, is that even before the tax cuts and other measures can reach the spending stream, that flow will be substantially diminished, having gone up the flue in the smoke of this harsh winter's extra heating bills, profiting only the oil and gas interests.

The bitter weather the Eastern half of the country has had to endure has emphasized the shameful inability of this society to provide a decent living for millions of Americans, especially the elderly. The scandalous housing shortage, with runaway landlords leaving their buildings unheated and helpless old people to freeze to death, has been brutally called to the attention of even the most callous of us.

Americans are accustomed to think of themselves as enjoying "the world's highest standard of living." This has not been true for a while, though few seem to have noticed the change. As the M.I.T. economist Lester C. Thurow points out in *Newsweek* (February 14), we will shortly have to take pride in being citizens of the sixth most prosperous country, as measured by per capita gross national product.

Little Kuwait passed us a quarter-century ago, and, more relevantly, Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark are ahead of us now, and Norway and West Germany are about to join that superior company. Thurow makes two other points that Americans, and their President, would do well to ponder. One is that this country is second only to France on the scale of inequality of income distribution in the industrial countries (as measured by the factor of difference of income between the top and bottom 10 per cent of the population); the "degree of inequality" is 100 per cent more than in Sweden, 50 per cent more than in Japan, 36 per cent more than in West Germany.

The crusher to free-enterprise complacency in these comparisons is that Sweden has "the most comprehensive social-welfare system in the world," West Germany puts union representatives on corporate boards and Japan "controls and plans the economy to a degree that makes the U.S. seem like rugged free enterprise."

Against these humbling facts we can set the attitude of American business toward the current depressed condition of our economy. It is put typically by the Wall Street columnist of *Barron's*, the financial weekly, who writes (February 7) that "the economy needs stimulation like Buffalo needs snow." Carter must soon learn that the economy will get no help from that quarter.

The Warnke Problem

Would the United States be safer if the man charged with arms control and disarmament truly believed that control of arms was dangerous and any step toward disarmament impossible? That seems to be the view of those in Washington who have been sniping at the

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President's nomination of Paul C. Warnke to head the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. They have been spreading the dire rumor that Warnke, a veteran of the Pentagon establishment in the days of Lyndon Johnson (though a foot-dragger on Vietnam), once flirted with the idea that reciprocal, phased steps toward disarmament could safely be initiated by either side in the great nuclear confrontation. Put specifically, the notion is that, given the vast overkill capability on both sides, one or the other could scrap a weapon (or just fail to build one), wait for a reciprocal response from the other side, and thus start to reduce the vast arsenals both possess, without for one minute endangering the security of either country.

The frightening code word for that sensible process is "unilateral." It is meant to conjure up the specter of this country as a simple-minded Uncle Sam idiotically standing with his hands down in a boxing ring with a killer. The truth is altogether different, both technically and as a matter of common sense.

If we were, say, to proclaim loudly that we would not go ahead with our famous cruise missile—and waited to see what the Russians would then do about their Backfire—our deadly capacity to obliterate Russia would remain intact for years to come, no matter what Moscow did or did not decide to do. This overkill factor, which both sides now possess, is what makes the lessons of the past so misleading. In the old nonnuclear days, if an adversary built a few more ships or added some ground divisions or improved his mobilization techniques, there was reason to fear what he could do with his new relative superiority. But those days are gone; relativism is dead and absolutism (of destruction) rules in its stead.

Cool heads on both sides know this but are caught by the never relenting demand of their military-technocratic bureaucracies, for more and better arms. It would seem likely that President Carter, the former nuclear submariner, may grow tired of this constant theme from the military he commands. He will learn to distinguish between genuine threats to the nation's security and mere bureaucratic pressure from the defense complex, or so we must hope.

Carter's briefing file must be jammed with all sorts of new proposals to increase our military strength and upgrade our weaponry. He should add to that file a remarkable speech made on the floor of the House on February 7 by Les Aspin (D., Wis.), perhaps the most learned (and therefore disillusioned) student of the defense establishment in Congress. Aspin was dealing with the latest push to improve the combat readiness of NATO, as urgently proposed by Senators Nunn (D., Ga.) and Bartlett (R., Okla.) in a recent report to the Senate. The Senators base their argument on the allegation that Russia and its Warsaw Pact troops are now capable of a quick knockout punch on the ground in Western Europe, and that we must therefore forget the old idea that we would have weeks in which to mobilize against a threatened attack. We won't have that time, they say, so we must get ready to counter the blow, at a cost Aspin puts in the "tens of billions of dollars." Aspin, in our opinion, demolishes the case for this vast upgrading of force in Europe. He shows that the Russians have a "short-warning attack" capability with only a few divisions, not a vast horde. He marshals the evidence that a buildup reaction on our part against this supposed new threat would greatly "decrease stability in Central Europe."

Beyond that, he makes a sensible proposal for what he calls an "inexpensive political solution." It would consist of using the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction talks, which have been stalled in Vienna for years on the issue of troop reduction, to "negotiate measures to increase warning time and reduce the chance of a surprise attack." They would include international observers at installations on both sides, a reduction in the frequency of maneuvers and the numbers that could take part in them, and a limit to troop rotations. Each side of the strategic great-power confrontation that has dominated the politics of the past thirty years has demonstrated impressive ingenuity in building new weapons and almost none at finding "inexpensive political solutions." The United States has always been the leader, and proudly so, in this long, expensive exercise in "security"—because we could afford it, or so we thought.

The question now is: can we go on escalating the cost and the dangers of this process, and do we need to? Of course not, says Representative Aspin, and we agree. Paul Warnke can be confirmed by the Senate only if he seems to have doubts on this point. That tells a great deal about the problem President Carter faces as he tries to move this country off dead center on arms control, not to mention disarmament.

The Palpable Ghosts

President Carter does not seem to mind that the backstage machinery of his high office is very visible. For example, we are told right out that his chat beside the fireplace was written by James Fallows, a bright young journalist who joined his staff after the Democratic convention. So the public now knows that Carter *delivered* a Fallows speech. That does not mean that the President is a puppet of Fallows; he at least acted as editor.

We have become so used to the notion of the professional wordsmith hammering out the oratory of the great and not so great that the identification of Fallows should not surprise us. What is unusual is the openness of it all. We are not even given the traditional word that the President pored over draft after draft, rejecting this idea or that phrase, even imposing some of his own prose on his amanuensis. That was the form in the days of JFK, for instance, when the press was given to weighing Kennedy's words to assay the contribution of a Sorensen or a Goodwin to the final product.

But Carter seems to have none of the pride, false or otherwise, that would make him want to have every mortal, or even deathless, phrase attributed to his own pen. During his campaign, when the spear carriers could often be plainly seen through the curtain, he never seemed to mind these distractions from his soliloquies. His pollster, Pat Caddell, regularly told the press all about the data he had brilliantly gathered and their effect on the pitch of a particular speech, tuned perfectly to the mood of the moment—according to him.

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There is no ominous conclusion to draw from this, no charge to be made that the President is either inarticulate or not his own man (in fact, he speaks a good sentence when he is clearly on his own). There is no hope that Presidents will ever return to writing their own orations on the backs of envelopes en route to Gettysburg. But it may not be out of line to suggest that the President's prosers should step back a bit from the limelight and not follow the lead of Fallows, who told a reporter that the Carter talk was a "gesture at communication rather than a forum for big news." The demythologizing of the Presidency can be carried too far.

Breaking the Linkage

Linkage is dead! Long live Reciprocity! The shearing of the kingpin of Henry Kissinger's apparatus caused no more of a break in the continuity of American foreign policy than does the passing of a monarch in a stable kingdom. We have it from President Carter himself that the good old days of linkage are gone forever and that the crown now rests on reciprocity.

Carter was asked at his first press conference on February 8 (which he handled with practiced ease, by the way) whether there was not an element of risk in simultaneously protesting against the violation of human rights in the Communist world and pushing the Russians for some form of agreement on arms control.

His answer was unequivocal: he saw the two matters as separate. He mentioned Kissinger by name and rejected his doctrine, saying that he would continue to speak up on questions of human rights whenever that seemed appropriate. He went out of his way to express his regret that the Soviet Union had arrested Aleksandr Ginzburg, one of the leaders of the Russian dissidents (he used that word). He declared that he believed he would "come out better" if he "consistently" supported human rights everywhere. "My determination is very deep," he said, and the words look more formidable than they sounded as he uttered them. "We have got to be firm and we have got to be forceful" on this question, he said, and it seemed that he was asking the Soviet leadership to understand why he felt that way and even to help him with the burial of old linkage.

If linkage is villainous—and it is possible to look at it as normal power politics among the nations—then Kissinger is not the only perpetrator of the villainy. Congress has played the game quite vigorously, as in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment of 1974 which required Russia to speed the exit of emigrating Jews as a condition for lowering our barriers to trade. But it was the Secretary's specialty, a device he almost always tried to employ in order to get his way (that is, America's way). He tried it in Vietnam, seeking help from Moscow to end that adventure. He tried it in the Middle East in an effort to avert the war in 1973. He took a stab at it in Angola in 1975, attempting to get the Kremlin to call off the Cubans. It figured in the maneuverings on SALT. Occasionally it helped a bit; usually it did not. It just did not seem that we had enough of a quid to offer in exchange for a Russian quo. But it always sounded good, like so many of those Kissinger "conceptualizations" that dazzled his admirers.

Now we are told that each of the questions between us and the Russians "should be discussed on its own footing." That was the way Secretary of State Vance put it four days before the Carter press conference and the final rites for linkage.

One should have a certain suspicion about the vitality of the newly fashionable term "reciprocity." It seems doubtful that this or any other nation will ever forswear the use of any bargaining chip in its dealings with other powers. All will not now be sweetness and light, with every issue gravely discussed on its own merits without reference to the other factors that could make our interlocutor see things our way. But it seems likely that there will be a change at least in emphasis.

Regardless of the switch to reciprocity, the President's press conference remarks on human rights were extremely encouraging. On that he seems absolutely firm—there will be no "trade-off" for other possible advantages. He said that repeatedly, in several different ways. To repeat: "My determination is very deep."

Korea: Time to Trust the People

JAMES STENTZEL

President Carter's campaign promise to withdraw U.S. military personnel from south Korea has reopened a discussion that has been dormant for eight years, during which we witnessed the debacle in Vietnam and the ensuing Vietnamization of Korea, including Park Chung Hee's march to dictatorship.

The debate that Carter's pledge has opened up in Washington suggests that U.S. policy makers will tread a narrow and self-defeating course. The first problem begins with Carter who, having promised withdrawal, then phased it over a three-to-five-year period. The Japanese Foreign Ministry, after Vice President Mondale's visit, said it understands that the U.S. withdrawal from Korea will be a matter of "many, many years." Carter appears to be holding firm only on his commitment to remove the hundreds of U.S. nuclear warheads from south Korea.

The second problem is that any withdrawal of some 41,000 U.S. ground and air forces from south Korea may be tied to increased U.S. military aid to the Park regime. Such a deal is sure to exacerbate tensions on the peninsula, increasing any disposition Park may have to march north and forcing upwards the overkill capability

James Stentzel has written widely on Korean affairs. Based in Tokyo for most of this decade, he is currently free-lancing out of New York.

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on both sides. The commander in chief of U.S. forces in Korea, Gen. John W. Vessey Jr., told *The Washington Post* last month that he would "gamble on a southern victory" if there were war in Korea today unassisted by outsiders. Therein lies the answer to the alleged need for more weapons of destruction in south Korea, which has already received some seven times more outside assistance than has the north.

The third problem, and the most crucial both now and for the future, is that the whole withdrawal question is being debated in an historical vacuum which learns little from Vietnam and knows even less about the aspirations of the 50 million Koreans, north and south. Into this vacuum have leaped popular myths which continue to plague us. Only three will be mentioned here: the myth that military might makes right, no matter what the human, social, political or economic costs; the myth that rabid anti-communism and a polarized and permanently divided Korea are somehow good for stability in Asia, and the myth that if we could interfere more rather than less in Korean affairs, keeping the south dependent on the United States and Japan, we could better press our high moral intentions there (regretfully neglected since we crushed leftists and labor unions and installed Syngman Rhee as a right-wing dictator in 1948), win the hearts and minds of the Korean people and triumphantly regain our role as a beacon to the free world.

Many Americans, and many older and better-off south Koreans, cling tenaciously to such myths, which have served to legitimize thirty-two years of U.S. manipulation of south Korea on a political and ideological chessboard. In the past few years, U.S. policy makers have admitted as much: we're in Korea not for the Koreans but for the Japanese. Nothing could better explain the failures of our Korean policy, and nothing sticks harder in the Korean craw. South Koreans, especially the younger generation, are beginning to see the continued heavy U.S. presence, like Japanese colonial rule before it, as one continuum of cynical foreign exploitation. As surely as they know the costs of dictatorship and repression under Park, they know the bitterness of being a client state, one in which the United States pushed the Japanese to buy back a half-interest in 1965, under the Japan-ROK normalization agreement.

Discussions of U.S. military withdrawal from south Korea can take place in a vacuum or they can recognize the Koreans' stubborn will to resist foreign domination and to decide their own destiny. The deepest aspirations of all Korean people are for national reunification, political independence and economic self-reliance. To date the north Korean regime alone has promoted these claims while we spent billions imprinting our myths on the south.

The United States must now be bold enough—and smart enough—to allow south Koreans to raise the same nationalistic voice from their perspective. Washington should deal from strength—the strength of trust in the Korean people—and not from militarism and dictatorship built on distrust and masquerading as strength. We need to move from narrow self-interest, anti-Communist and anti-nationalist, to a broader base which appeals to nationalist impulses as Park's fascism cannot. Our military withdrawal is a minimal prerequisite for ending the whole dependency/exploitation relationship. The terms of our withdrawal can do much to assist or to frustrate Korean aspirations. The key is to distance ourselves from Park and ally ourselves with all the Korean people, allowing them every possible opportunity to forge their own future, peacefully and independently.

The first step is to remove all of the approximately 35,000 U.S. ground forces and all the nuclear weapons from south Korea, immediately and unconditionally. The troops are hostages to a brutal dictator; neither they nor the nukes are needed to supplement already superior south Korean forces. And even if they were needed, the opinion polls show that today most Americans oppose using them. The United States could and should insist that the Korean peninsula be declared a nuclear-free zone. Voluntary withdrawal of our nuclear weapons should not, however, be conditional on such a declaration. As for the some 6,000 U.S. air personnel in the south, half should immediately be pulled back to Japan—to bolster the country we're actually defending—or to other points off the Asian mainland. The remaining 3,000 should be moved to positions in the southern third of south Korea and be prepared for quick demobilization (on terms to be discussed below).

The second priority is to open doors to north Korea. Total isolation has bred only intransigence, ignorance and fear in Pyongyang, Seoul and Washington alike. Formal and informal relations with the north can do much to defuse tensions on the peninsula and restore some semblance of sanity in the three capitals. They would also give the United States some of its much-needed distance from the Park regime.

The third priority would be to insist on strict military parity between north and south in terms of ready armies, reserves and armaments. There are two intentions here: to discourage the aggressiveness that goes with clear military superiority, and to stop the United States from arming Seoul beyond the hilt as part of a troop withdrawal package. Military parity should serve as the basis and the encouragement for the two Korean regimes to move toward agreements on nonaggression, mutual force reductions and general disarmament. These moves, in turn, would help to restore Korean economic self-reliance by cutting huge defense expenditures on both sides.

The fourth priority, related to all of the above, would be to give Seoul the required one year's notice that the 1953 U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty will end, and the final 3,000 U.S. air personnel be withdrawn, on the first day after the period of a year when all outside

LETTERS (*Continued from page 194*)

and mentor is admirable but that it blinds him to the fact that Norman Thomas was, for too many years, a staunch cold warrior.

Mr. Swanberg is right. I am ambivalent about Norman Thomas, for his decades of extraordinary service were tarnished by his years as a soldier in the cold war. If Mr. Swanberg had not glossed over this serious contradiction, his book would have been a splendid biography and not merely a splendid tribute. *Richard J. Walton*

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powers (specifically China, Russia and Japan) also drop their military assistance commitments to either regime and pledge themselves to Korean self-determination and peaceful reunification.

An appropriate international inspection team (probably outside the U.N., which has provided cover for the U.S. forces in Korea) could be charged with reporting any violations of these agreements and with enforcing the only two exceptions regarding foreign military assistance: (*1*) to supply replacement parts for weapons systems in place at time of parity, and (*2*) to restore parity if one side should independently increase its military personnel or upgrade its weapons technology. If, for example, south Korea refuses to abandon its present efforts to develop its own nuclear capability, that same capability would have to be supplied to the north—presumably a development sufficiently suicidal to make the south desist.

Only the concreteness of these proposals makes them controversial. The most formidable opposition will come from those who benefit the most from the status quo—American and Japanese multinational corporations and banks, the Pentagon, and the south Korean elites, especially those educated under the Americans and Japanese. But others will also take exception. The ideological Left will say such proposals don't go far enough, that they leave the United States playing a rather important role in Korea. But the United States, which did the basic diplomatic work to divide the Korean peninsula as the spoils of war in 1945, might be allowed to save a little face by helping to guarantee the Koreans their right to hoe the thorny row to reunification and peace today. The moralistic Left will say the proposals go too far, and that they don't heed the cries for human rights and democracy. But the United States, which did so much to militarize the peninsula and thus suppress those rights, might best create an environment for those rights through a program of demilitarization.

Although there are always risks, we must dare to be concrete in discussing troop withdrawal or lose an opportunity made long overdue by Vietnam. Part of that opportunity is to appeal to growing common sense, not only in Washington but in Peking, Moscow and Tokyo. The Chinese, Russians and Japanese know that the costs of instability and possible war in Korea are escalating rapidly; they know, better than Americans, that territorial conquest in Korea is highly unrewarding among a fiercely independent people. Such common sense could well be appealed to by a Carter administration exhibiting the same quality.

The four priorities could be realized much more quickly than the process they seek to enable—the peaceful reunification of an independent Korea. Reunification will probably require many stages over many years, and probably cannot fully succeed until both Park Chung Hee and Kim Il Sung are in their graves. The path will not be easy. The important matter now is to do everything in our power to enable the Koreans themselves to begin the process.

Lest anyone consider these ideas radically new, Vice President Spiro Agnew publicly proposed phased withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Korea in 1969. And Nixon's Moscow and Peking summits helped to create the climate that made possible the 1972 north and south Korean agreement to stop the "hate campaigns" and move toward peaceful reunification. What intervened, of course, was the U.S. humiliation in Vietnam. Insanity has reigned ever since: Park Chung Hee coming to resemble the worst of Nguyen Van Thieu, Kim Il Sung trying to pose as liberator Ho Chi Minh, and the United States "reassuring its allies" by sending B-52s, a squadron of fighter-bombers and an aircraft carrier to chop down a poplar tree.

One would hope we could be more original than that in 1977—perhaps even more forward looking than Agnew and Nixon. □

POPULAR RELIGIOSITY

NEW WIND IN LATIN AMERICA

PENNY LERNOUX

Rio de Janeiro

It is only in the last decade that a handful of Latin American sociologists have begun to understand the origins and the pertinacity of the poverty that burdens their continent. The average Indian, black or half-caste, is not poor because he is lazy, stupid, disorganized or cowardly; he is poor because he is oppressed, and because he is oppressed he becomes ensnared in a self-perpetuating culture of poverty. In the few cases where the culture of poverty has died out, the Latin Americans have proved to be just as hard-working and dynamic as their U.S. counterparts. Juazeiro do Norter, for example, stands out as a go-go town in the otherwise feudal fiefdom of Northeastern Brazil, the heritage of a cultural freedom dating from the 19th century. As Brazilian theologian Eduardo Hoornaert points out, "Colonizers show the colonized that there is wealth to be had, even luxury, but they do not show them how to obtain it. Obviously, they tell the colonized races that wealth comes from work, but the people do not believe this because they can see it isn't so. A 'good' position in society is only possible by belonging to the dominant culture." In such situations it is hardly surprising that foreign aid programs do not work, that the people resist any change and that the rich get richer while the poor multiply. Exhortations to work harder and to drink and breed less make no impression on a people born to fatalism.

None of this is new, of course; Oscar Lewis said

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the same thing years ago. But until recently nobody had a practical suggestion for replacing the culture of poverty with an ethic of development, AID propaganda notwithstanding. Ironically, the institution responsible for finding a solution also shares the blame for Latin America's underdevelopment: the Roman Catholic Church. After centuries of denigrating the natives' culture and spiritual beliefs, the Church has made an abrupt about-face, discovering the latent power of "popular religiosity" to answer poverty and fatalism.

A fusion of 16th-century Spanish Catholicism with local folk beliefs or cults, this popular religiosity is a genuine form of cultural expression and creativity—indeed the only one for most Latin Americans. Whatever the rigor of his political, social or economic deprivation, the Latin American can always turn to the spirits or saints for comfort and help. These are very real, personal friends to whom he speaks in his own language.

Unlike the industrialized world, where religion has succumbed to materialism and a flexible social structure, Latin American culture is deeply impregnated with folk Catholicism. Farming traditions, health, education, social mores, politics are all endued with religious folklore. The challenge, according to the Church, is to alter the fatalism characteristic of popular religiosity by encouraging a desire for change within the community; or in political terms, by fostering a social awakening among the poor. "When purified and developed, popular religiosity leads to other expressions of the people's feelings in politics and social affairs," said Segundo Galileo, one of Latin America's foremost theologians.

After popular religiosity was officially recognized by the Latin American bishops at their historic meeting in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968, it flowered in extraordinary ways. Midway through a recent Sunday afternoon Mass in Vitoria, Brazil, for example, nine peasants gathered before the altar to present a playlet about the problems of the land-starved people in Northeastern Brazil. "My family is hungry and we have no land," said the first peasant to the second, who wore the large, white sombrero of Brazil's wealthy ranchers.

"I don't want to hear your troubles," replied the rancher/peasant. "Get off my land."

Another peasant with a priest's collar then approached the rancher to tell him how Christian he was for donating money to build a cathedral (much laughter).

"What shall we do?" asked the first peasant of the rest of the troupe. "The rancher tells us we must leave this land."

"Let's go to the cities to find work," suggested one.

"No," said another. "We will only end up in the slums. We must stay and fight for our rights."

"That's right," said a third peasant, who began to chant a Brazilian version of *We Shall Overcome*.

"Yes, we shall overcome, we shall overcome with Jesus Christ," sang all the peasants as they were joined by the ten bishops behind the altar and the 3,000 people in the Church.

While such goings-on undoubtedly shock more conservative churches, the people of Vitoria obviously enjoyed the play and approved its message of solidarity. And the formula certainly works from the Church's point of view, to judge by the religious response; all 3,000 people took communion. Or by the aggressive spirit of the new Christian peasant communities in Brazil.

Farther south, in the working-class outskirts of Buenos Aires, 25,000 people a week visit the shrine of San Cayetano, carrying noodles, cans of meat and powdered milk, flour, soup and clothing to offer the Italian immigrants' saint. These offerings, which total 15,000 tons of food and 250 bags of clothing per month, are later distributed to Argentina's slum and rural poor. Until 1970, when a team of priests led by Father Angel Sallaberremborde assumed the shrine's administration, the statue of San Cayetano was so inundated by peso notes, flowers and candles that no one ever saw it. Through an education program that includes a monthly magazine, *Bread and Work*, Father Angel's team has convinced the people that "they should thank San Cayetano by helping their brothers." Previously, he said, "it was a closed relationship between the saint and the worshipper."

Since democracy is a basic feature of the Church's new programs in popular religiosity, no innovation is contemplated at the shrine without consulting the people. The change in offerings, for example, received its greatest impetus from the worshippers themselves. "I heard one man tell a woman that she should bring food instead of candles, because 'San Cayetano helps you and you should help other Argentines to have bread,' " recalled Father Angel. When the shrine's priests replaced the altar's crucifix with a more modern one, the people complained. "They feel the shrine belongs to them, that it is like the house of their father, and we respect their feelings," the Argentine priest said. The old crucifix has been put back.

Though irregular churchgoers, Latin American Catholics never fail to visit their local shrines. Consequently religious sanctuaries that were considered white elephants only a decade ago have suddenly taken on new importance in the Church's eyes. Moreover, these shrines can become a national symbol for a people with no means of political expression. More than 100,000 Argentines participated in last year's annual procession to the sanctuary at Lujan, there to pray for peace in strife-torn Argentina. It was the largest religious gathering in the country's history.

A religious shrine can also provide the people with an outlet for their worries and sufferings. At San Cayetano, for example, a confessor is on duty twenty-four hours a day, not so much to listen to the people's sins as to give them some comfort in the current atmosphere of repression and fear. A typical case was the mother of a 2-year-old child who was contemplating suicide because her husband had "disappeared," a euphemism for political kidnappings by Argentina's right-wing paramilitary squads.

In neighboring Paraguay, where Gen. Alfredo Stroessner is busy selling off large chunks of the country to the Brazilians, the shrine to the Virgin Mary at Caacupe has become a symbol of national identity. Long at odds with the Stroessner dictatorship, the Paraguayan Bishops Conference believes the Church's first priority is to provide the average Paraguayan with a sense of personal identity

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and nationhood. Because of Church propaganda, Caacupe is now seen as the essence of all that is Paraguayan. It was from Caacupe that the Church also launched a massive evangelization program to encourage solidarity and faith. Representatives of Paraguayan peasants and urban workers were invited to the shrine for a candle-lighting ceremony in honor of the Virgin that emphasized all the positive aspects of popular religiosity; each returned to his village or slum with a candle and a statue of the Virgin to repeat the ceremony. The program was enormously successful because the bishops chose the Virgin of Caacupe to convey their message.

Like most Latin Americans, the Paraguayans feel a special attachment to the Virgin Mary, but they have also a particular historical reason. Thanks to a series of ruinous wars with its neighbors in the 19th and 20th centuries, Paraguay lost most of its male population, leaving the women to care for families and farms. Motherhood as symbolized by the Virgin of Caacupe is therefore deeply revered.

By recognizing the need for religious symbols, Paraguay's Church has taken an enormous step forward in communicating with the largely Indian population. Catholic priests now believe that it is impossible to evangelize the people with literal translations of the Bible or catechisms because the European texts entirely ignore the importance of words in the Guaraní Indians' religious language. As Jesuit anthropologist Bartomeu Melia points out, "What is said is less important than how and why it is said." Thus Christian Guaranís find more religious expression in the repetitive chanting of litanies, such as the rosary and funeral orations, than in the European tradition of question-answer catechism. Similarly, the religious pilgrimage is more important than arrival at, or presence in, the sanctuary or even attendance at Mass.

Only by living with the people can priests and nuns learn to understand these religious expressions. "We are not the people," said Paraguayan theologian José Blanch. "We think of them as 'them,' and this is a true reflection of the difference in our social status. It is necessary to live and be with the people, to be poor as they are, in order to interpret what they think." That is precisely what worries the Stroessner government—all those religious living with the people; and bishops, too! Were it not for the critical Church and its civic education programs, Paraguay would be a nice, quiet dictatorship with no social unrest.

One of the first to see the connection between political awareness, poverty and popular religiosity, the Paraguayan Church also took the lead in what has since become the accepted basis for popular pedagogy—listening to and learning from the people instead of trying to impose foreign ideas upon them. In the flood of literature now pouring forth on the subject, there is also a common theme of humility and regret, for in studying popular religiosity Church intellectuals have discovered how blind they were to the depth of the people's simple faith. "While 90 per cent of Latin Americans are baptized Catholics, only 20 per cent regularly attend Mass," said a Colombian priest. "This does not mean that the remaining 70 per cent are not Christians. It means that we priests have not bothered, or known how, to bring these people into the community of the Church."

What is more, Latin American theologians and bishops now accept the Church's historical responsibility for perpetuating the people's poverty. "The thesis of Marx and Engels that religion is just an opium for the people, and hence does not prepare them for social and economic growth, has been pretty well exploded," said Brazil's Hoornaert. "Today, everyone recognizes that in certain circumstances religion can be an opium but that under others it can foment development: everything depends on how the message is delivered.

"The Protestant ethic of work played an important role in developing U.S. capitalism. Unfortunately in Latin America the missionaries had the mentality of the conquering colonists. All initiative was taken away since the people were not expected to react. Any ethic of development has to grow out of initiatives, or at least the possibility of them, and these simply do not exist in a colonial situation."

A Paraguayan *pai*, or priest of the Guaraní Indians, put it another way: "The white men who call us pagans are themselves un-Christian. For them, I am not a Christian because I have my ritual dances and long orations and live in a community without social classes or private property, believing that we are all sons of God, baptized or not, gringos, Brazilians or Paraguayans. But the white men are without prayer, egotistical, violent and deceitful, using force and disdain to make us afraid and to diminish us. In the name of their religion they treat us like animals. Yet we are the true inhabitants of this land, the favorite sons of the Great Grandfather, and we know there is a place for all of us in the heavens that He created."

Joaquin Alliende, a Chilean priest and one of the hemisphere's most eloquent spokesmen for popular religiosity, feels that the Latin American Church's slavish imitation of all things European, particularly intellectual snobbery, has had a lot to do with the alienation of such people as the Paraguayan *pai*. "If we don't watch out, we may find we are strangers in our own land."

Alliende believes that both the upper classes and the Church "need to be educated in the value of dialogue. If we are discovering what is Christian in the Marxists, why can't we discover the same in our brother who has a statue of the Virgin in his hut or goes to the shrines to fulfill a promise?"

Msgr. Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, secretary general of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), agreed with Alliende. "The trend toward secularization encouraged the belief [in the Church] that any expression of emotion or sentiment was vulgar, unacceptable and inappropriate to refined religious ceremonies. But as Jesus pointed out, there are many things hidden from the wise and the learned that are revealed to the simple people. Popular religiosity forms the 'Christian memory' of our countries; it is the expression of the 'People of God.'"

Latin American religious argue that the continent's Church has been too much under the influence of French and Belgian theologians, that it is time to "deintellectualize the Church." Nowadays, few of the seminarists com-

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plete their studies in Europe, since such institutions as Rome's Pio Latino Americano and Pio Brasileiro colleges are held responsible for the Church's alienation in Latin America. Father Jose Ayestaran, Pio Latino's rector, foresees a time when the college will no longer have any Latin American applicants (the Latin American enrollment has dropped from 100 to thirteen in only six years). "The young Latin Americans say they want to stay home and study their own people," he said.

Such is the interest in popular religiosity that most of the local churches have sponsored conferences on the subject; the Chilean hierarchy has even opened a seminary on religious folklore. Meanwhile, the Argentines are rewriting the Bible in Argentine Spanish, the Peruvians are developing new forms of religious instruction based on Quechua and Aymara Indian traditions, and in Brazil lay ministers of the sacraments are increasing so fast that they may soon outnumber priests.

This sudden, overwhelming interest in popular religiosity is due in part to its universal appeal. Unlike the Christian-Marxist dialogue which split the Church in the late 1960s and early 1970s, popular religiosity is accepted by everyone as a good thing. It is also seen as "one last chance for the Church to evangelize the masses." Otherwise, the Latin Americans may take Saint-Exupéry's advice: "If a religion does not understand you, laugh at it."

The Church may never have another, or better, chance because the upsurge of interest in popular religiosity has coincided with two other important events—the exodus of priests and nuns to impoverished rural areas and slums and the rise of military dictatorships in twelve Latin American countries. As a result of military repression, the hierarchy in many countries has taken a firm stand with the poor against dictatorship. At the same time, it has begun to see the seeds of a new kind of society in popular religiosity which, if developed, can overcome the insecurity and anxiety which Catholic sociologists say underlie the fatalism that helps to perpetuate poverty.

Though paternalistic, the missionaries were anything but intellectual snobs. From the very beginning of the conquest of Latin America, they tried to build on existing Indian structures. Most of the first churches were adaptations of Indian temples, and pre-Columbian rites were often included in their ceremonies. In 1558 Pope Paul IV ordered "that the days dedicated [by the Indians] to the sun and their idols should be selected for special celebrations to Christ, the Blessed Mother and the saints." The first Masses were recited, sung and, especially, danced. One of the early bishops of Guatemala told all new missionaries that the first thing they had to do was to teach the Indians to dance the Gospel.

Despite its superficiality and cruelty, this forceful evangelization of Indians and African slaves produced one of Latin America's few genuinely indigenous creations, syncretic religion. Latin American colonial art is rich in examples of this fusion, such as the use of moon and sun in religious paintings to represent the creator and his wife/mother, or the Bolivian Indians' golden-haired Virgins with one breast longer than the other, symbolizing the Aymaras' earth mother.

Like many Latin American tribes, Mexico's Otomies Indians adapted pre-Columbian rites to Catholic ones, such as the *njadana* ritual of praying to the dead on All Souls' Day—only the Otomies do not pray to comfort the dead but to propitiate them, for if not given such attention the dead will infect the living with disease. Mexico's Zenacantecos Indians have similarly altered the message of the crucifixion to fit their own pre-Columbian religion. The thousands of crosses scattered across southern Mexico are meeting places for the Zenacantecos' ancestral gods, who gather to discuss the affairs of their living descendants, from whom they expect offerings of black chickens, white candles and *aguardiente,* the local firewater.

Even baptism, the most universally accepted sacrament in Latin America, has extra-Christian meanings. Among the Indian tribes of the Andes it is an insurance against thunderbolts. For the Zenacantecos it is a means of attaching the soul to the body. And in Paraguay baptism prevents the child's head from growing too large.

As Hoornaert points out, the Indians and the Africans soon concluded that Christianity and their religions "were not so different after all because of the readiness with which the white men's priests baptized their children." Thus Catholicism gradually came to be regarded as a "magnificent expansion of their own fetishisms." The plasticity and superficiality of the early missionaries' Catholicism actually made it more acceptable than Islam to Brazilian blacks. As in Haitian voodoo, Brazilian macumba—the rituals of the Umbanda religion—attached the characteristics of Christian saints to the African *orixas*, or minor deities. Hence Xango became St. Jerome and Abaluae, St. Lazarus. Oxala, macumba's most powerful spirit, is Christ.

Umbanda is so popular that it has 32,000 centers, or *terreiros*, in Rio de Janeiro alone. Catholic sources estimate that 30 per cent of the Brazilian population practices Umbanda; the other great African cult in Brazil is Candomble, the religion of Bahia. In Rio the Umbandistas are grouped into four federations which regularly elect middle-class deputies to the local assembly, although Umbanda, like the samba, belongs to the counter-culture of the Rio slums.

Government officials are delighted at Umbanda's growth because, unlike the Catholic Church, which is highly critical of the military regime, Umbanda preaches an authoritarian government and insists on a rigid hierarchy. "You never hear any talk about politics or 'liberation' in an Umbanda *terreiro*," said an Umbanda priest.

Umbanda and Candomble are not the only challengers to Catholic hegemony in Brazil. The Protestants also are making sizable inroads—not the mainline, middle-class denominations but the Pentecostals, who account for 75 per cent of Brazil's 8 million Protestants. Like Umbanda, the Pentecostal religion abjures political involvement, taking an other-worldly approach. Its particular attractions for Latin Americans are its emphasis on the layman instead of a priestly hierarchy and the opportunity for self-expression.

As a result of the new interest in popular religiosity, the Catholic Church is paying closer attention to the African cults and to the Pentecostals in order to learn

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from their success. One result has been more lay participation in the Church, including a largely lay-directed Mass. Catholic religious are also attempting to reach some sort of ecumenical understanding with Umbanda and Candomble priests. Jesuit Francisco Barturen, who runs a fishing cooperative in Bahia, claims that the basis of the cooperative's success was his participation in annual Candomble fishing rites. "The fishermen told me that if I, a Catholic priest, could join in their rites, then I must really understand them," he said.

To develop a coherent and dynamic pastoral program for popular religiosity, the Church has had recourse to two other tools, anthropology and psychology. Anthropological studies have prompted the Church to alter its former disdainful attitude toward popular legends; these are now understood to be a form of historical communication among the people. Anyone who has tried to interview a Latin American peasant will agree with Catholic anthropologists that they often seem to talk in riddles, saying one thing and meaning another, smiling when they tell you about the death of an infant brother, for instance. "That is because they cannot, or are afraid to, express their true feelings," said a Brazilian social worker. Religious legends, symbols and gestures are a means of self-expression; the challenge is to unlock the riddle. "Unlike Europe or the United States, where secularization has sidelined religion, here it has a strong influence on social, economic and political conditions," said Renato Poblete, a Chilean sociologist. "In discovering what is really important to the people in a religious sense, we will also discover new political solutions."

In Andean rural societies, for example, religion, politics and economics merge in the tradition of *cargos*, or obligations incurred during annual religious celebrations that honor the local patron saint. A *cargo* is not only an obligation; it represents the highest office, for the men selected to pay for the festival's food, drink, music and decorations gain enormous social prestige. In Ecuador they can be more important than local government officials. A way to redistribute wealth and eliminate class differences, the *cargos* are changed annually so that each villager has an opportunity to pay. Anthropologists say these festivals are also a collective unburdening, a brief time of mythological magic and color when the Indians can return to a past when there was no white "patron" or cultural oppression.

"In a culture impregnated with religion, as Latin America's popular culture is, the religious message penetrates where the school can never reach, and by very subtle means," said Father Hoornaert. "By a message not explicitly developmentalist, religion can really determine a society's evolution."

The problem has been that, until recently, the message encouraged fatalism. Because God is viewed as remote and powerful, like the local dictator or absent landlord, most Latin Americans ask the saints or souls of the dead to intervene for them. There is a saint for almost every activity, from lottery ticket selling to bread making, and for every conceivable problem. St. Patrick cures snake bites; St. Anthony is invoked to attract boy friends. Each country also has its own unofficial saint, among them Venezuela's María Leonza, an Indian princess who doubles as earth mother and goddess of the Caracas freeways; José Gregorio Hernandez, a Venezuelan doctor much revered by the Colombians and Venezuelans; and Argentina's "Dead Correa," a young mother who died of thirst in the deserts of western Argentina around the year 1835.

The saints and souls of the dead are as real to these people as their own neighbors. In a typical scene at a recent Aymara religious festival for St. James in Bolivia, a mourning Indian woman harangued the effigy and even struck it to elicit a response. Malnutrition and lack of medicine were not responsible for her baby's death; it was the saint's fault. Similarly, any sudden improvement in the family's fortunes is attributed to offerings or promises made to a particular saint or soul. The highways abound with crosses and miniature chapels to the souls (*animatas*) of the dead, some of which, such as the *animata* housed in the central rail station in Santiago, are believed to have miraculous powers.

The principal drawback to this personal you-me relationship with the saint or *animata* is that it induces a narrow, fatalistic view of life. Church studies conducted in 1972 in the Santiago slum of La Vitoria showed that the people believed they will always be poor because that is their destiny. Nor did they expect any happiness in the afterlife, since dead souls spend their time haunting the living, a concept similar to that of Mexico's Otomies Indians. "Religiosity/animism is basically something that helps the person to get through this life," said Chilean theologian Antonio Bentue, the author of the survey. "The person at least has the possibility of offering the saints or souls a gift to intercede."

In this very narrow relationship, he said, change is impossible "because authority and tradition are accepted without criticism. Nor is there any social conscience within the community. If there were, the people would join together to protest the economic and social realities responsible for their poverty, instead of trying to bribe God through the saints or the souls of the dead."

For all that, there are many positive values in popular religiosity, including a deep sense of the sacred and a disposition to prayer, spontaneity, courage, cordiality and a willingness to share happiness and suffering. The goal, according to Latin America's bishops, is to encourage the people to see the saints as models of Christ's life, not as agents of God's will, and to alter the fatalistic aspect of devotions by educating the people "to become co-creators with God."

Professor Bentue maintains that "conscientization" programs, a Latin American invention to raise the level of self-awareness, can eliminate such fatalistic expressions of popular religiosity as magic and spiritual bribery. "This brings forth protest, not against destiny but injustice that is not consecrated by destiny and is therefore vincible. Protest leads to the conviction that the future can be better, and thus more emphasis is placed on the future and change than on the traditional past."

Though Bentue's theory may sound too good to be

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true, it has been proven in countless cases in the past five years. Bishop Leonidas Proano combined popular religiosity with conscientization to produce a social and political awakening of the Indians of central Ecuador. The Church also has ample historical evidence that, when its message emphasized social and economic growth, there was a radical change. Hoornaert cites the example of Father José Antonio María Ibiapina, a remarkable lawyer-priest who worked in Northeastern Brazil in the second half of the last century. Ibiapina encouraged the discipline of work by giving the people a sense of dignity and by emphasizing the value of their manual work. He did so by using peasant traditions like the *mutirao*, a Brazilian form of community barn-raising, and the compadre system which is based on the godfather and godmother relationships, ties that are much deeper than they are in Europe or the United States. Because Ibiapina was everybody's compadre, he could get the people to accomplish an incredible number of public works, from dams to homes for orphan girls who later formed the backbone of the Northeast's elementary school faculties. Unlike his European predecessors, Ibiapina did not denigrate the people or their beliefs but helped them to break the culture of oppression. His legacy is the booming town of Juazeiro do Norte, mentioned earlier in this article.

General Pinochet's Chile offers another example of how the Church can use popular religiosity to bring about positive change—not among the generals, who believe they are above God, but among the poor, who have suffered the worst consequences of the military regime. As a result of the government's economic policies and harsh political repression, the situation in the Santiago slums is desperate, with 40 per cent unemployment and widespread malnutrition. To stave off starvation, the dioceses have encouraged the people to organize with Church financial support, free school-lunch programs for 23,876 children and 127 community industries such as bakeries and leather goods factories. These are not your ordinary soup kitchens or charity for the poor. There is no sense of patronage or paternalism; on the contrary, everyone is expected to help his neighbor, and no crying to the saint or *animata* about the injustices of destiny. "Praying all the time won't help much if Christians don't assume responsibility for the difficulties of the people, just as Jesus did," states a Church comic book, one of a series written for the Chilean slums. "When a Christian fails to speak out, he is silencing God, because it is He who wants to speak through our mouths."

While no one dares to speak out publicly under the current military regime, there are many other forms of Christian expression, such as the worker's family that lent its bedroom for a Church school-lunch program and is now starting a communal weaving factory in the back yard. All the neighborhood mothers take turns preparing the lunch, a piece of bread and a soup made of seaweed and onions. The children are glad to get this one meal a day, for there is nothing else to eat. So many parents have arrived fainting from hunger at these school restaurants that Church dioceses have begun a program to feed adults and teenagers.

While the people running the programs are afraid and economically insecure, theirs is not the fatalistic fear and anxiety that sociologists ascribe to the culture of poverty but the result of the military's ongoing political and economic repression. None would dream of shouting "Down with Pinochet" in a public plaza, yet these slum dwellers are neither cowed nor resigned. "We have not forgotten the social gains we made in the past," said a slum mother. "We cannot say anything now, but there will come a time when 'those people' must go, and then we will build a better society in which there is equality and justice for all of us."

Catholic sources believe that political oppression has helped to purify the Church and that the most obvious manifestation of this purification is popular religiosity. Like the Brazilian peasants who presented the playlet in the church at Vitoria, Chilean slum families find opportunities for collective expression in the Chilean Church, which has swept aside such traditional taboos as dancing in front of the altar during Mass. During the religious dance festival at La Tirana in northern Chile the people are encouraged to join in the Mass instead of holding their dances, as in the past, away from the Church. Dating from the 16th century, these dances are a deep expression of reverence for La Tirana's Virgin of Carmen. Nowadays in northern Chile there are more religious dance groups than sports clubs; and more than 45,000 participants practice two hours daily, five days a week, during four months of every year—all in honor of the Virgin.

Once disdained as "illiterate cowboys," Chile's colorful *huasos* are urged to attend the annual festival of "Cuasimodo" at the national shrine at Maipu, where Cardinal Raúl Silva, dressed in a cowboy poncho, welcomes 2,000 *huasos* on horseback and bicycles to re-enact the ancient tradition of accompanying the priest on his rounds as he distributes communion to the sick. Mass is later celebrated with dancing and folk singing. This is not a once-a-year event, for the *huasos* and their families continue to meet with Maipu's pastoral group throughout the year in an effort to deepen their faith.

In the Chilean Church's opinion, the Tirana dance clubs and Maipu *huasos* are the best possible stimuli for community base groups, another recent Latin American invention. Similar in some ways to Israeli kibbutzim, the base groups are composed of people from the same slum block or rural village who pray and often work together. Unlike Latin America's experiments in community action programs, which frequently failed because of local political differences, envy or old feuds, the Christian base groups are tightly knit communities united by the compadre system of the sacraments. In the most advanced base groups, no one can become a godfather or godmother unless he or she is an active member of the community and prepared to accept the responsibilities of compadreship, which in Latin America is tantamount to becoming a member of the family.

This new interpretation of the sacraments has a double purpose. On the one hand, the ritual takes on a deeper, more meaningful significance for the participants. (The words and gestures of the sacraments are undergoing radical revision in several countries to accommodate local cultural differences.) On the other, it creates the basis

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for a social conscience within the community in an updated version of Ibiapina's successful methods of a century ago.

While Church authorities are not naive about the short-term outlook for popular religiosity, they believe that, over a period of one or two generations, it is possible to change the culture of poverty, replacing fatalism with the knowledge of religious and social liberation. Given the grim panorama in Latin America with its sea of military dictatorships, rising crime rates and massive poverty, popular religiosity at least offers some hope of positive change. For all its lost opportunities, the Catholic Church still has the power to sway the Latin American masses, no matter how fiercely the military regimes persecute its bishops and religious. By helping the poor to find a means of religious, social and political expression, the Church at last is recognizing the fundamental cause of Latin America's underdevelopment. □

IT'S BUDGET TIME AGAIN

'THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING!'

DAVID CORTRIGHT & ROBERT BOROSAGE

Over the last twenty years, Americans have been treated to an annual performance of *Sturm und Drang* in advance of Congressional hearings on the defense budget. A fusillade of press leaks on some new Soviet menace blends with the blare of the brass seeking additional weapons. The spectacle has had so many reruns that many in the legislative audience are now bored with it. This year, however, a much more intense and concerted performance has captured the attention of legislators and the national press alike.

The primary theme is the new National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet military intentions, first leaked to *The New York Times* during the slow-news Christmas holidays and picked up by nearly every print and broadcast outlet since then. The estimate—a product of what is described as a "furious" debate between regular intelligence analysts and a special team of outside "experts"—gives a "grim" portrayal of Soviet aggressiveness. But the NIE is only one of many variations in a well-orchestrated performance by conservatives, designed to scare citizens about Soviet intentions. The entire movement poses a major policy challenge to President Carter, one which will tell much about the future directions of this administration.

Annual assessment of Soviet military intentions is the task of analysts within the $10 billion intelligence apparatus. Over the years, the views of the CIA's analysts have predominated, with conflicting views footnoted in the text, and often supported in appendixes. Clearly irritated by the moderate, unimpassioned findings of previous analyses, President Ford and CIA Director George Bush sought to influence the result by appointing an outside team to provide an "alternative" view. The panel was headed by Harvard Prof. Richard Pipes and included retired Army Lieut. Gen. Daniel Graham, former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; Paul Nitze, former Deputy Secretary of Defense; Thomas Wolfe of the Rand Corporation; John W. Vogt, former Air Force General; William Van Cleave, a member of the SALT delegation, and Foy Kohler, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union —all known to hold gloomy views about Soviet designs. This outside group, designated Team B, was given access to raw data and told to debate its views with the regular analysts. In an exchange described as "bloody," the panel apparently succeeded in moving the accepted analysis closer to its own predilections. Team B was a stacked jury, chosen to deliver a predetermined verdict. The process gave very conservative voices official endorsement to attack intelligence community analysts.

Political leaders have ignored or rebuked disagreeable intelligence analysts since at least the time of Xerxes. The Greeks had to be warned against the folly of killing messengers bearing bad news. Modern practice is somewhat more subtle. The Pentagon Papers demonstrated that the Johnson administration repeatedly ignored CIA assessments of the bombing of North Vietnam. Walt Rostow (like his Nixon counterpart, Henry Kissinger) often preferred to get raw data directly, the better to fit them to his views. Instead of basing policy on assessments, estimates were created to fit the policy. The Pipes committee is another variation of the practice, in this case changing the analysts to get the desired result—that is, an official finding that the USSR seeks strategic "superiority" over the United States.

There is much less to support the claims of the Pipes panel than meets the eye. According to reports, it based its estimate on three primary charges: that the Soviet Union is improving its air defenses; that it is proceeding with a massive civilian defense program, and that it is improving the accuracy of its missiles. The USSR is improving its capabilities in each of these areas, but there is no evidence in the public domain to suggest that there has been a new surge of development. Moreover, none of these steps gives the USSR an edge over the United States, or substantially alters the present relationship between the two powers. For example, the Soviet program for low-level air defense may well be a response to American acquisition of the F-15 fighter-bomber and the likely procurement of the B-1. Low-level air penetration has always been an area of U.S. technological ad-

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vantage over Russia. Are we to expect that buildups of American air power will simply be ignored by the Soviet Union? As for Moscow's embrace of civilian evacuation plans, Hedrick Smith, *The New York Times* correspondent in Moscow over the past three years, reports what most everyone suspects is true: the civilian defense program is a widely neglected irritant in the eyes of most Moscow residents. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown concludes that no meaningful civil defense program exists in either the USSR or the United States.

Improvement in Soviet missile accuracy is an important military advance, but again the Soviet program is part of a long-standing attempt to catch up. By 1980, it is claimed, the Russians will be able to drop an ICBM within 300 feet of its target; the United States can already come nearly that close. Are these Soviet projects the stuff of strategic superiority? Rep. Les Aspin is correct when he states the new claims are "75 per cent bull."

In any case, the very concept of "superiority" is pretty much meaningless in the calculation of nuclear deterrence, which is based on convincing a potential adversary that an attack will be met with devastating response. Given the number and variety of nuclear warheads possessed by the United States, it hardly matters how many missiles the Russians have. No sane leader would launch a nuclear attack on the United States, and no level of armament would deter an insane leader from doing so. Those who feel secure under the theory of mutual destruction should rest easy. Henry Kissinger himself has reminded us that "the term 'supremacy,' when casualties on both sides will be in the tens of millions, has no . . . operational significance."

The United States has always led the grisly race for nuclear weaponry. It was the first country to possess (and the only one to use) the atomic bomb, the first to develop the hydrogen bomb, the ICBM, the independently targeted warhead (MIRVs). As Richard Barnet has noted, the recent Soviet initiative in strategic weaponry seems to be part of a decision, made in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis, to trim the American lead in this area. "We taught the Soviets what it means to be a great power in the nuclear age," remarks Barnet, "and they have learned their lesson well." Even with its recent gains, however, the USSR still has only 3,300 deliverable strategic warheads, compared to 8,400 for the United States.

However, the National Intelligence Estimate was not about capability but about intention. The Pipes panel therefore went beyond empirical evidence to examine the underlying motivations of Soviet policy. The panel apparently criticized the CIA analysts for relying too heavily on hard data rather than on Kremlin ideology. About this the members of the Pipes group had little doubt: the Soviet Union was the same implacable menace its members had first described in the 1950s, and they were not disposed to let facts change their minds.

The truth is that Soviet foreign policy seems increasingly moderate, in logical response to its current geopolitical situation. Most Soviet forces—unlike our own—are devoted to continental defense of the homeland. The USSR faces potential adversaries on all sides of its vast territory. On the east, at least half a million men guard the border with China; they face the largest land army in the world. On the west, hundreds of thousands of troops are stationed in East Europe, to police the restive "colonies" as much as to match NATO forces. In the south, Iran continues to build a potent modern arsenal, and maintains its traditional antagonism toward the Soviet Union. These external factors impose major constraints on any Soviet adventurism.

Thus, in recent times the USSR has often exercised considerable restraint in international crises. During the Middle East war in 1973, it reacted to the military collapse of its allies with unusual moderation; the fissure in Soviet-Egyptian relations can be traced to this failure to act. Russia finds itself increasingly unable to paste together the cracks in the Communist world, and has been unable to halt the emergence of a Eurocommunism that is hardly to its advantage. In Zimbabwe, the Soviet Union and the United States have acted in concert. Needless to say, the USSR does seek to increase its political influence in the world, and its formidable military power is a significant factor in international affairs, as demonstrated in Angola. But the realities of Soviet policy hardly justify the overheated fears peddled by the Pipes panel.

What, then, is all the gnashing of teeth about? Why a new Red scare? Some have dismissed the move as merely an attempt by some conservatives in the national security elite to gain support against an administration that would exclude them from policy circles. But this bureaucratic explanation ignores the context for the new argument about American policy.

The Pipes committee is noteworthy because its activities are but a small part of a broad scare campaign now being waged by members of the national security elite. Individuals who normally operate on the "inside" have joined together to go public. Thus, the impetus for the Pipes panel originated with the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, a collection of aging conservatives selected primarily by former President Nixon. Several FIAB members are part of a new public group, the Committee on the Present Danger, which has become a major force in the call for increased militarization in the United States. Formally established in the fall of 1976, but in formation for two years, the committee's purpose is to convince the American people that the Soviet Union is bent on world domination and that nothing can save us but an immediate expansion of our military budget. Its membership includes representatives from business, labor and academia. The policy chairman of the committee, Paul Nitze, was one of the seven civilian members of the Pipes panel. Three of the seven are on the committee, as are six of the sixteen members of the FIAB.

The arguments made by the committee and the Pipes panel are part of the dispute that broke out two years ago in a public feud between then Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger and Henry Kissinger. Schlesinger, now serving as Carter's energy czar, used the occasion of the 1976 budget to call for a strategy of "limited nuclear war," and to propose initial funding for several new and very expensive strategic weapons programs. Donald Rumsfeld, Schlesinger's successor as Defense Secretary, extended the Schlesinger argument to conventional forces,

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and presided over the largest expansion of the defense budget since the war in Vietnam. Procurement and development of new military hardware shot up by more than $8 billion in the budget for fiscal 1977. But these steps, which promise to add tens of billions to military spending in the next years, seemed threatened by Carter's calls for budget cuts, and his flirtation with "Populism." Moreover, public support for cuts in the military budget is at a modern high. Thus the conservative national security elite decided it was time to go public, to warn the public that "the Russians are coming."

Many of the fears of the conservative wing are shared across a narrow spectrum of opinion among national security insiders. It is generally agreed within established foreign policy circles that the relative position of the United States in the world has declined over the past decade, a decline symbolized by the defeat in Indochina. The ability of the United States to impose its will on Third World countries has been significantly impaired, and the emergence of these countries as potentially powerful economic factors has contributed to the changing balance. The growing scarcity of critical raw materials has already made OPEC a major actor in world politics; other cartels may become increasingly important.

External decline has been reinforced by the loss of domestic support for America's imperial role. The anti-war movement and a growing skepticism about government in general have stirred the public from the acquiescence that buttressed interventionist policy. The sense of purpose and of external threat necessary to support international adventure has been dissipated. Moreover, internal economic shortages have increased opposition to wasteful military spending, with the polls showing stronger support for military budget cuts.

Faced with these reverses, the conservative wing of the national security elite has called for a return to cold-war intransigence. The new complexity of international affairs cannot be ignored in policy, but it can be slighted in rhetoric. Members of the Committee on the Present Danger clearly believe that traditional anti-Communist bombast can help create a public consensus for larger military budgets and greater activity abroad. They also believe that only by a show of will and military strength can the United States hope to retain its position as the guarantor of a world order favorable to domestic commercial interests.

Thus the committee's publications evoke the image of a Russia intent on world domination, probing at every chink in the armor of the "free world." The United States is the "crucial moral difference," the only possible salvation for other countries. The way to restrain the voracious Soviet appetite is to increase American will and military might. In recent years, the percentage of our GNP devoted to the military has declined from approximately 9.5 per cent in 1968 to less than 6 per cent. The scaremongers hope to reverse this trend, shifting more resources to the military. In concrete terms, this means support for a new generation of strategic weapons, including the Trident submarine program, a new round of mobile ICBMs and procurement of the B-1. The cost of these and related programs is likely to reach into the tens of billions of dollars, on top of current outlays placed at about $112 billion in fiscal 1978.

The conservative campaign may be seen as a challenge to the Carter administration. The short-term effect has been to forestall even the minuscule promised cutbacks of $5 billion to $7 billion in the defense budget, a Carter campaign promise which Defense Secretary Harold Brown started backing away from immediately on appointment. The campaign may also influence early talks on strategic

Oliphant, The Washington Star

". . . And Ivan The Terrible Grew Bigger and Uglier and Nastier, but the Poor Pentagon Had No Money to Stop Him . . ."

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arms limitation agreements, complicating any bilateral moves toward further arms reductions.

The new administration may in any case be ambivalent about the scare campaign. Carter himself frequently attacked the USSR during the campaign, even stooping to criticize détente for giving the Soviet Union too much. The ease with which Theodore Sorensen was swept away by conservatives in and out of the Senate may be symptomatic. The Carter national security leaders did little to support Sorensen's nomination to the CIA directorship in sharp contrast with the efforts made to prop up Griffin Bell, the new Attorney General whose civil rights record is less than noble.

Carter's national security team represents the moderate wing of the national security elite. The primary actors—including Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to the President, three Cabinet members, and Carter himself—are former members of the Trilateral Commission. A creation of David Rockefeller and international business interests, the commission has placed its emphasis on the "core" areas of North America, Europe, Japan and the Middle East. Its publications recognize the decline from what Brzezinski called "paramountcy," but its views are far less alarmist than those of the Committee on the Present Danger. It eschews a return to strident cold-war rhetoric for a more flexible approach to the world. Carter and his advisers will be willing to accept new limits on American power in marginal locations like Korea or Panama. They will concentrate on using America's economic and cultural resources rather than its military strength (a change indicated by the assignment of Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal and economic chairman Charles Schultze to the National Security Council). They will be more concerned with aspirations for human rights, for equality, for democratic freedoms than Kissinger ever was.

Yet these differences should not be allowed to mask the wide areas of agreement between the squabbling factions of the national security elite. Both groups believe in a natural American primacy in the global order, an eminence they see thrust upon it by its economic and military strength. Both remain staunchly anti-Communist and support a bold military posture. The first public statements made by the Carter administration on human rights were directed at Cuba, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, countries where concern about legitimate human rights could also feed anti-Communist rhetoric.

The new administration operates within a political and institutional legacy still dominated by our militarist past. In the postwar years, organized labor has traditionally favored a large military budget and Lane Kirkland, George Meany's likely successor, is a member of the Committee on the Present Danger. While Carter owes his victory in part to minorities, the young and women, the dominant voices within the traditional Democratic coalition remain strongly pro-military. In the past, the Democratic response to economic stagnation has been to increase military spending. Since entire sections of the South and Southwest are dependent upon sustained military spending, any change in priorities would be politically difficult.

The Carter administration thus faces a sharpening conflict, for the past era of both guns and butter is behind us. A shift of resources to the military will limit the amount of money available for long-needed social programs—universal health insurance, a full-employment guarantee and jobs program, a new transportation program. Struggles over the federal budget have already produced casualties in the social area. National health insurance, a cornerstone of the 1976 Democratic platform and a major demand of labor, women and minorities, will be postponed until at least 1978. If the percentage of the GNP devoted to military spending is not cut back, few other programs can be enacted. With the rising expectations engendered by Carter's flirtation with Populist rhetoric, the result will be increasing domestic unrest.

It is this prospect that the Carter team must fear the most. Brzezinski has described current American opinion as "ambivalent but constructively malleable," awaiting new national leadership. But a Trilateral Commission publication expresses concern that too many within the society will not remain "malleable" if their own needs are not met. The commission published a study, *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York University, 1975), the American section of which was written by Samuel Huntington, the man who previously gave us the forced "urbanization" strategy in Vietnam and who has been widely reported as the likely appointee to Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. In *The Crisis of Democracy*, Huntington describes what he calls "an overload" on the decision-making process, with too many groups actively participating in politics. The result is a decline of respect for authority and a tendency for government to try to do too much. The solution to these ills is to constrict democratic participation. Huntington calls for a "greater degree of moderation in democracy," with "some measure of . . . noninvolvement on the part of individuals and groups . . ."; instead the authority of elites with special expertise should be respected. Huntington seeks to bolster the authority of government, by placing restrictions on the flow of information (regulating the press itself if necessary), by quieting the voices of protest and activism, by lowering the expectations of the intellectuals. The Trilateral Commission's hope that economic pressure can supplant military force abroad fits this general frame, for economic pressures are more complex and invisible, and far less likely to spark public opposition.

The Crisis of Democracy reveals the common bonds between the various factions of the national security elite. The "moderation" of democracy urged by the Trilateralists flows naturally from the increased militarization advocated by the Present Danger zealots. No major Carter spokesman favors a significant reduction in the military budget, and without cutbacks few resources can be freed for new social programs. If the administration accepts the new generation of strategic weapons now being peddled through the public scare campaign the squeeze will be all the more severe. At that point, Mr. Huntington's "moderation" of democracy may entail a new pacification program, this time directed at domestic dissenters. Mr. Carter will no doubt explain it in a fireside chat. □

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SIXTY MILLION GRAVES

The VA Cemetery Extravaganza

JANE HOLTZ KAY

Arlington National Cemetery is a nice place to visit but would 60 million people want to lie there, and do 160 million others want to pay their bill? These are two of several disturbing questions buried beneath the inauguration of the Veterans Administration's new cemetery program. In round figures the VA's "martial" arm of government service has just gone into the burial business for one-quarter of the nation. Its new National Cemetery System has created five national cemeteries—each the size of Arlington, each costing $24 million to $30 million, and planned to serve a constituency of 30 million veterans and their kin.

On one weekend in late October, officials from the VA flew to Cape Cod, Mass., and Indiantown Gap, Pa., to dedicate two 600-to-700-acre sites. Crews are now working on a third in Riverside, Calif., while designers draw plans for the last two sites (at Quantico, Va., and Calverton, N.Y.) in a program which is at once the least noted and largest burial undertaking in U.S. history.

Americans, as we are reportedly told, and especially by British novelists, have lost the gift of viewing their mortality with reason. In grief, we cow before dark-suited funeral directors; in good health, we let cemetery salesmen talk us into leasing corner plots in perpetuity (ah, yes, the corner office) and vie for cemetery bluffs (rooms with a view).

Thus, it is easy to have some tolerance for this federal program which promises to restore some decent simplicity to the American way of death. But on closer inspection the minority nature of the VA "clientele," the vastness of its operation and the open-ended, uninspected numbers involved could cause a corpse to heave. Look for numbers and you get affable generalities. Seek out totals and you get genial disclaimers. Final figures? "We don't like to do it because it scares the general public," says Donald Skinder, director of planning for the VA. "We like to break it down in phases." He smiles benignly.

However you approach them, though, the statistics are staggering. For just this year, the price tag for construction and master plan development is almost $8.5 million. The final bill for the separate sites runs from $24 million to $30 million. And that is the least of it: the bulk of the money to be spent is not—and cannot—be estimated. It will go for maintenance—to eternity. Forever and ever, there must be one employee for each 5 acres, according to the VA's own estimates. All along the way to tomorrow they will be clipping lawns and edging tombstones; for decades, they will be opening graves and closing them, as this emerging department of death grows large and everlasting. "It's new business for us," the VA's New England regional director William Connors puts it, like a salesman taking on a new line.

And that is what it is—the military's new line of death. Should it be? Should the government be going into the burial business and, especially, should the agency that serves the aging survivors of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, take on this new but little calculated branch of welfare capitalism?

The VA asks no such questions; expanding bureaucracies seldom do. "Eighty-six million people! That's the total figure!" Skinder describes it expansively. "That's over one-third of the population," he exclaims on the phone from Washington. Later, sitting in a Boston oyster house on the eve of the Cape Cod dedication, the director breaks it down. Start with 29.3 million veterans today. Add a spouse. Maybe some dependent children. You get it, he says. World War II veterans are averaging 57 years old these days, he notes. The VA's cemeteries are filling fast and only one-sixth of all veterans can reach them now, he says. The military highway to the hereafter will be even more crowded in the years to come. They need more, he says. More space. He talks of *twelve* regional cemeteries, not just these five; he envisions one per state—or more.

Surprisingly enough, the burial debt to veterans is long-standing—Lincoln promised it when he opened a dozen cemeteries to serve those who fell in the Civil War. And one reason why Congress has taken the VA's expansion so calmly is that the right to burial in a veteran's cemetery (at a cost of $400: $250 for funeral services and $150 for a plot) had simply come of age. That sum is small compared to private plots averaging twice that and funerals coming to six times as much. But, multiplication quickly shows, it means a $12 billion burial bill for Uncle Sam in the next two decades.

It is no wonder then that the VA's $110-per grave construction estimate seemed cheap when it was laid before the subcommittee on cemetery and burial benefits some four years ago. Look at the testimony. Certainly no Congressmen shot stinging questions at the veteran pressure groups that testified. No consumer activists nor taxpayer representatives appeared. Even private industry—the municipal or commercial cemeterians—gave feeble protests as the 1973 National Cemetery Act transferred cemetery care and growth from the Army to the VA. Pushed by veterans' groups—and the military families closed out of Arlington National Cemetery by the crowds that followed the burial of John F. Kennedy there—Congress simply deemed it a debt to be discharged.

Besides, the layout seemed so rational—so egalitarian—in the VA cemetery plots; so secure of maintenance through the generations to come; so careful in design; so low in price—so efficient. None of the goblins of *The Loved Ones* hovered there in the spartan but careful VA plans for nonprofit, nonsectarian, nonhierarchic burial. Even the Sierra Club statements on specific sites, mostly former military bases, endorsed reclaiming these old tracts for cemeteries. Protests? Hardly. In California, representatives *competed* to have the regional cemetery

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in their home towns. "It's like motherhood," another garrulous VA spokesman observes. "Would you want to be the one who said 'we shouldn't give the boys a decent place to rest'? It's not tasteful." Images of heroes in a potter's field dance before our eyes.

Well-planted images, according to some. "It's just as much a lobby as if it were the NAM," another World War II veteran observes. Then, he refuses to let you use his name. Still, there are other less cynical, circumstantial reasons why the vast work has sailed ahead so easily in this no-build era.

For one thing, the VA's National Cemetery Service takes land that is now empty ("excess" is the Army word). The sites are portions of ragged bases, for the most part idle and awaiting who knows what. Turning this "surplus" land into cemeteries raises no environmental problem; or at least much less of a problem than development would. After all, a cemetery is so serene, compared to other land uses; too quiet to unsettle the neighbors. "I don't expect any trouble there," Cape Cod Selectman Jerry Cahir laughs. And, if "surplus" and "excess" seem obscenely wasteful labels for the land, isn't development more so?

Certainly the VA took advantage of current open space and "land heritage" sentiments. The rolling beauty of Arlington National Cemetery was the bait. "Arlington of the West" went the description in California. The new cemetery "can be every bit as beautiful as Arlington National Cemetery in our nation's capital," declared Gov. Milton Shapp as he signed the Pennsylvania bill. VA arguments were tailored to the region—whether it wanted jobs, or open space, or both. And if the arguments were contradictory (memorial and military museums to attract the crowds don't quite jibe with untenanted land; access for one and all is not implied by military details in design), well, the country is large, the VA could contradict itself.

The arguments were not all public relations. The appreciation of the cemetery as a place is genuine. "Each is a splendid unit in itself and it will relate to the heritage of its environment," Skinder insists. And, indeed, first-rate landscape architects were chosen. If the cemetery for Cape Cod's Otis Air Force Base is typical, as claimed, Skinder may be right. The designs show a landscape gently sculpted into shape. There are few parking lots; abundant foliage. The buildings are made of on-site native stone, and half the acreage will continue to roll its way just as the glaciers scooped and contoured it eons ago. "It's designed as a series of pastures—like a meadow," said architect Stephen Foote of Perry Dean Associates. No grid or military line of crosses will parade across the field to the horizon.

We spent a warm fall day walking over the site. Not too many miles away, the Cape itself is slowly succumbing to the ravages of development; here, away from its beaches, our eyes take in 1,000 unpeopled acres. The someday cemetery with its young scrub pines and placid view has the contour and climate of northern New England. It is a hauntingly empty place on a Cape where emptiness may one day be a lost resource.

The architecture for this cemetery seems consonant with the site. The "very formal and geometric" look which Foote describes as the firm's design of thirty years ago for England's postwar Cambridge Cemetery is gone. This is no time for any aesthetic of regimentation. Right angles are to be avoided. The Perry Dean administration buildings will be cedar-shingled like the Cape's own cottages; their stone bases fit the place. Meanwhile landscape architects Carol Johnson Associates, the other design party in the Cape project, have shaped the roads for visitors in land-hugging loops. Flagpoles are to be the focus for the twisting natural contour. "It's a little like laying out a series of vistas and spaces," Foote sums the plan. And when the first administration and work structures are joined by a "monumental building" (a chapel and museum of "artifacts that are appropriate") as part of Phase II, the auditorium will show films of the local Cape Cod scene.

On all sides, then, the architect's emphasis is on integrity of land and sense of place. "We're not cutting any trees down," says Foote. "What we try to do is keep it as natural as possible," he says as we make our way back down an eroded path on this fragile turf.

"Its value to the Cape is as open space," landscape architect Carol Johnson reaffirmed on another day. "There is a variety of spatial experiences," she describes the plan, her fingers sweeping across the topographical maps that line the basement wall of the firm's Cambridge office. "It's a flowing space with contiguous areas of natural vegetation," says associate Craig Halverson.

The wood-frame office of Carol Johnson is a mile or so away from another cemetery that arose amidst the environmental impulses of another day. Mt. Auburn Cemetery, an historic site, was the first large-scale swath of land contoured to an ideal vision. Architect A.J. Downing designed a romantic pastoral place; the picturesque rural grounds of this cemetery of 1831 emerged to welcome picnickers, and helped Frederick Law Olmsted to create New York's Central Park.

Today we cannot imagine "luxuriating in a solemn and picturesque environment," as historian J.B. Jackson describes the use of Mt. Auburn then, but the cemetery's emergence in this latest Era of the Public Environment is strangely parallel: again, in an environmental age, the cemetery has become a symbol and an emblem of our ideas about the land. More than a management problem for next of kin, it is a reflection of a new respect for the natural world; of broadening thoughts on public space; of concern with how we treat ourselves, our souls, our soil—and especially of the fragmentation and ambivalence of these trends.

For proof of the ironies observe the supplicants for the first National Cemetery Service site in California. From their words, you would think Americans had undergone a total greening; that this was a citizenry with nothing on its mind but parks. The claims and wishes of the boosters of their own areas for the first regional cemetery would have thrilled any environmentalist. Their endorsements of scenery, of landscape, of a quiet unsullied space emerged quite touchingly from California, home of the strip and the trailer home, in testimony before still another subcommittee on burials and benefits two years ago.

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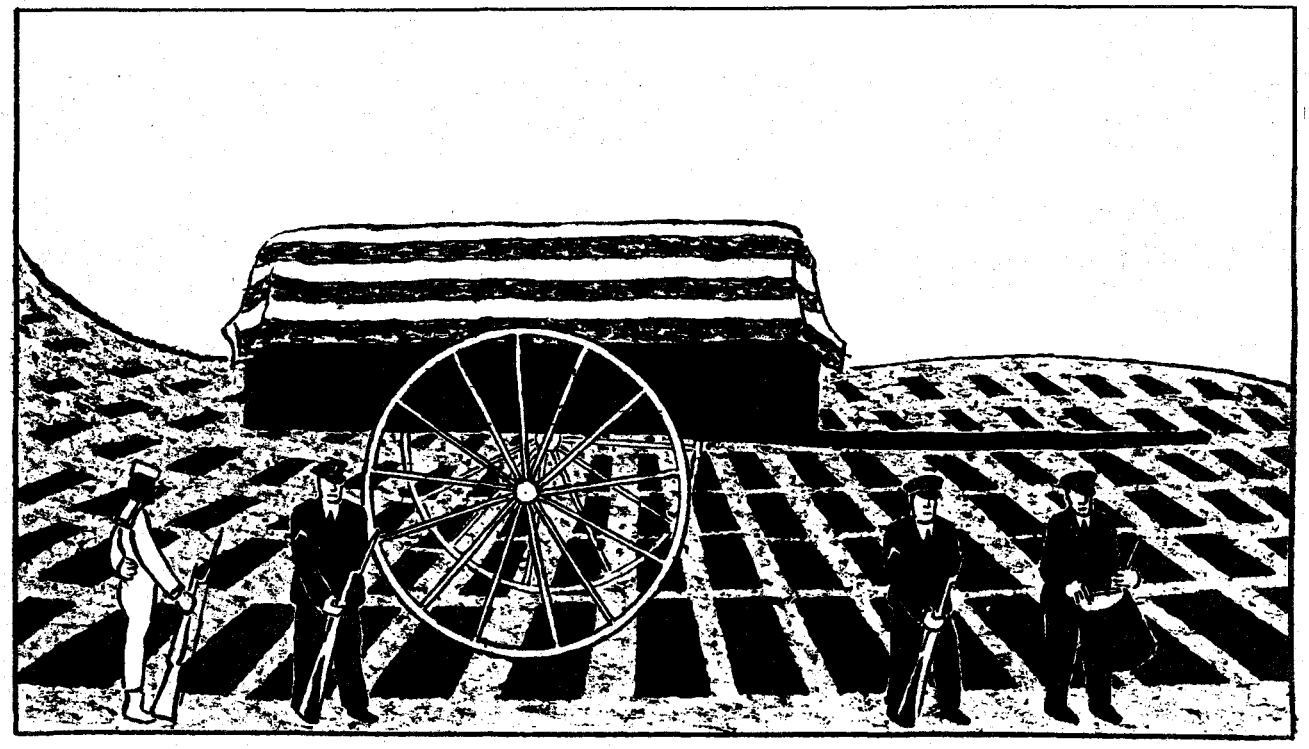
Their descriptions of a "loved one's resting place" might fit the manual of Friends of the Earth. The American Institute of Planners could not promote "smog-free views," "scenic grandeur" or "peace and tranquillity" more passionately than they. California representatives sounded like pantheists, and veterans' groups were positively Byronic as they lobbied for a superb and eternal environment. One can snicker at the search for a "solemnly beautiful" grave or laugh at Congressman Danielson, chauvinistically extolling the beauties of the "golden hills of California" to his Eastern colleagues from greener zones. But the words take on a sadder cast when one thinks of the spoiled landscape on which so many of the *living* dwell.

Obviously, then, the VA program skirts the broader environmental issues of the living, even as it supposedly addresses them. In the end, it exploits a fragment of land for a fragment of population—as all developments must in a country where the use of total land remains unplanned. For, despite the care for local plants and tenderness toward the sites, it is clear that to expand from an initial 3,500 acres for 1.5 million graves to 70,000 acres for the 60 million bodies sought would consume great gobs of land. In perpetuity. Consider merely the pipes and water sprinklers planned to keep all these lawns green. The digging. The tending. The massive large-scale mowing patterns. And while VA burial is permitted to go four caskets deep, thus saving much space by comparison with private cemeteries, the land is gone for good and all. No potatoes will grow on the Calverton site; no parks or schools will come to those unspoiled Cape Cod acres. An HUD study sixteen years ago found that more than half a million acres of urban land were already dedicated to cemeteries, and little more than that to city parks. It is worse now and the VA's exurban acres don't help. "I happen to believe it's more ethical to leave the land open," Halverson, the Cape's landscape architect says. His is the deeper land ethic of the hour.

One way to leave land open, of course, would be simply to cremate and scatter the ashes. This solution to the space squeeze does have a place in VA calculations. Their new cemetery designs show "columbariums"—places to put urns with ashes—as well as mausoleums and the majority graves. (Why columbariums for ashes is another question, of course.) But the VA does not plan to push this solution. It doubts it would appeal to most Americans.

The available figures bear the VA out. Cremation statistics range from 16 per cent on the East Coast to 33 per cent out West. Yet current ratios are not necessarily immutable, as Paul Gardescu, a landscape architect who has done work at the Arlington National Cemetery for his firm of Sasaki, Dawson, and DeMay, believes. "There are some interesting figures around," Gardescu observes: Before World War II, a scant 15 per cent of the English population went for cremation; today, it's 65 per cent, as land grows scarce. "Within twenty-five years there's been a shift in what is considered 'proper interment.' You see how quickly something that's seen as constant can change itself." Though a change to a new land ethic or cremation has yet to come to the United States, its arrival could radically alter any VA plans—and render grandiose ones obsolete.

Beyond environmental concerns, there are psychological ones. Some of the specifics of the VA procedure go against the grain of the new notions of death. In the National Cemetery Service plans for burial mourners will pray for the deceased veteran beneath a small shelter. Then the casket will be removed for burial in parts unseen. This procedure may be a logistic necessity—you cannot have mass burials of fifty a day without creating chewed-up



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lawns. Grim pits with derricks and cranes to further scar the site might upset the bereaved, as the VA feels. At the same time, professionals in the field of death endorse a more visible end to life. It is important, they say, to have a cemetery close at hand. Theorists nurtured on the views of Elisabeth Kubler Ross (*On Death and Dying*) hold that it is vital to have the burial in plain sight.

"I find that the funeral does not end in the funeral home," Earl A. Grollman, author of *Talking About Death* declares. "The cemetery plays a much more important role than people think. Many people need a little piece of real estate."

The VA also dismisses the lowering of the coffin as maudlin ("Too many widows used to throw themselves in the grave," a VA official jokes). But the new breed of thanatologists does not. "The cemetery is a place where people can go. It's not anything mystical," Grollman adds. "This is where they can come together. I think the cemetery plays an important role in terms of grief therapy. It's like ending a chapter."

Another aspect of the VA program that hinders closing the book of life is its distance: the new regional cemeteries will be an average 50 miles away from population clusters. The issue of distance that already plagues mobile Americans will be accentuated. Obviously, the VA cemetery can't solve the problems of a rootless society ("Mother's in Ohio and the children are scattered," a student on the subject shakes his head. "It's a mess.") Still it won't help. "People still make the pilgrimage," as Grollman says, but it's a long trek.

That trek may be why private cemeterians, as they like to call themselves, tend not to worry too much about federal competition. Picture the long funeral corteges stalled in traffic jams on sweltering summer days to reach Long Island or the Cape and you can understand their relative lack of concern. "I was at a Maine cemetery meeting," a Boston director recalls, "and they just laughed at the idea. Why expand, they ask, when the VA's own figures show that only 17 per cent of veterans use their cemeteries now? Better cemetery distribution will attract new numbers, the VA retorts. "Personally, I'm concerned—but as a *taxpayer*," says Duncan Monroe, director of Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

By such reckonings, of course, the VA's National Cemetery Service is damned if they do and damned if they don't. That is, if the numbers *do* come, there is the enormous cost of excavating and maintaining the sites. "It costs a lot of money to mow and trim 100 acres," says the director of a suburban memorial park. "Their budget is pretty loose." On the other hand, if they *don't* come, there is the waste of current construction. "It's just a business they shouldn't be in," the director says. "I'm a veteran, but the veterans' lobby is just a shadow. It's feared by politicians, but we don't think like veterans any more." It's a generation after World War II and all those "avenues of flags" and "big-bellied commanders in caps" don't appeal.

Certainly most Americans don't cotton to the graveside ceremonies the honor guards perform. Even if Vietnam hadn't soured us on military pomp, few veterans pine for veteran ritual. (As the daughter of an Army officer of two wars, I can attest that "military honors" never crossed my mind.) Add to the anti-military those who seek strictly ethnic or religious spots. The number shrinks and the central question grows: is it fair to serve so many and not us all? Should the government enter the burial business for just a fragment and not the whole? "Where do you stop?" as Halverson puts it. "You come into a whole socializing of the system of burial. Maybe the next person will say 'Why not *me*?' " Well, why not?

In the thirteen years since Jessica Mitford's *The American Way of Death* raked over the funeral industry and the seven since Ross's work *On Death and Dying* deplored death-denial, burial has become an open subject. Our notions on the dead—hence their disposition—are in flux. A secular society looks to old graves for insights, from tidy common plots to sites long covered by the drift of prairie dust, and wonders. Artists, the cutting edge of visual-social thought, and preservationists, the stewards of the past, have even created a cult of cemeteries. "Crazy Miesian ones with their flamboyant Catholic excesses; somber, all-gray Puritan ones in New England; the tasteful luscious Forest Lawn; an immense crowded veterans' cemetery in Seattle on a drizzly day," an *Artforum* writer muses after viewing a cemetery show designed by artist Jo Hanson. Inspection is at hand.

How shall we bury ourselves? When commercial high-rise cemeteries look like Holiday Inns and peddle Early American, French Provincial and Mediterranean crypts; when the high cost of dying is a national cliché—and shame—there may be cause to look to "Uncle Sam." But must this mediating "Uncle" wear a uniform? Must the Stars and Stripes fly in avenues of flags, as planned; must the sculpture come from Felix de Weldon of Iwo Jima statuary fame; must eagles stand on cemetery gates? Are military metaphors the proper way of death?

Still, there are the dead to bury and architect Stephen Foote, for one, thinks maybe the VA can do it best: "I think the civilian mind is likely to be a little emotional when it discusses a cemetery," he says, "the military are more likely to look at it logistically."

This may be the most chastening commentary of all—a sign that we have ignored burial issues along with other death-linked "morbid" ones. As a result, our solutions have been personal, multiple, haphazard and unsatisfactory—whether memorial parks with their discreetly flat tombstones and rolling lawns, or the more rococo models. Are cemeteries to teach, to give pleasure, to commemorate, for picnics—or are they to disappear as land becomes scarce? Which will it be—upright, or ashes, or stacked below ground? Mausoleum? High rise? The questions concern more than real estate and land use. They deal with life, as well as death. The cost of dying is priced too high; the methods of burial are out of joint in many ways. And vast land consumption lies ahead to provide for the 200-odd million of us after death.

Perhaps, after all, we need some federal hand to deal with this mass fate and soothe these ills—a public way to ease the waste of land and life. But it will be ironic (to say the least) if the government's only route turns out to be this vast, if eco-minded, occupation by the military. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Ghosts of War, the Wolf Within

THE BREAD OF THOSE EARLY YEARS. *By Heinrich Böll. Translated from the German by Leila Vennewitz. McGraw-Hill Book Co. 134 pp. $7.95.*

SAUL MALOFF

September 6, 1958, the day of the patriarch's birthday, encircles the present of Heinrich Böll's best-known novel, *Billiards at Half-Past Nine,* the moment toward which the collective and individual, dynastic and personal past has gathered, carrying its immense burden of history, responsibility, guilt, unresolved and finally unresolvable meaning. Monday, that bleakest day, is the day of action, such as it is, in Böll's 1955 novel, *The Bread of Those Early Years,* now unaccountably published in a new English translation five years after the award of the Nobel Prize. The year is 1953 or thereabout, a grubby time when the reverberations of war are beginning to recede, though its blight is still present everywhere, and the early signs of the "German miracle" have begun to appear on the bookkeeper's ledger. In Böll's work, whether the time is 1953 or 1958, the feeling is always "after-the-war," the close air of exhaustion, anxiety, depression, nameless malaise.

The narrative of this short novel, as it haltingly unfolds on that eternal gray Monday, is thin and tenuous, little more than a set of circumstances awaiting definition by its shaping force: the processes of memory—the "bread" of those early years—and its rising in the present. Walter Fendrich, appropriately a washing-machine repairman in a Germany newly embarked on the good life by the mass production of its principal icons, is 23 years old, too young to have served in the war. On this Monday he is informed by his father that a home-town girl, Hedwig, known to him by sight from their childhood, is coming to the (unnamed) city where he lives and works. Upon seeing her, this stranger, he is seized by a madness, as close in nature to fury as to love: she is the "train" he might otherwise have missed, which will carry him to a fated but unknown destination. Later that day he breaks off relations with his fiancée, the daughter and bookkeeper of the washing-machine manufacturer with whom he served his apprenticeship. That is virtually all there is of narrative.

The rest is memory, the intrusion of fragments of the past as they entangle the present moment and wrench it into strange unpredictable shapes. War itself is never more than alluded to, as if it were an event inadmissible to the mind, though its ghosts hover everywhere. As in *Billiards,* where fascism is never directly mentioned and is referred to only by the apocalyptic name "Host of the Beast," so here there is only oblique reference—a space on the wall of a boyhood schoolroom where Hitler's portrait once hung. Someone, a repellent little character who appears briefly in the hospital where his wife has just died to make a tumult over a tin of meat, lost an only son in the war; there was a shipwreck of some sort in mid-Channel. Fendrich suddenly recalls a passage of school French he'd not been able to translate and now mysteriously can: a contextless reference to the (French) war in Indochina. Hedwig lives in Juden Lane. (In *Billiards,* of course, the unassimilable holocaust will become an explicit moral and dramatic element in the action.) We, the onlookers, are tensely aware of the recent war; the shadowy sense of it is Fendrich's. Even the ruins of the city do not conjure up war in his mind; they are there as the mind's landscape, the natural habitat for his obsessions.

Bread—the fact and idea of bread, bread as food and symbol—haunts him, is of overriding importance, is his sex, politics, morals, the language he speaks, imagines and dreams in; the counter by means of which he tries to understand and transact his business with an insufferable world. Bread is the language of his feeling. Earlier, he and his father had begged bread; he had stolen his father's beloved books to sell for bread (and cigarettes—which, it may be recalled, were more precious than currency in the immediate postwar period); he had coveted and hoarded bread, lusted for it. Bread is the currency of his imagination, the coin of all his unassuageable hungers. The "wolf living inside" him howls for bread and the howling, as with the old man's bellowing for tinned meat in the hospital corridors, fills the book's space. Fendrich, overhearing a woman say of him that "he looks so distinguished," searches out his image in a mirror, and says: "I need something to fill my belly." By then he has all the bread money can buy: he's a successful journeyman with his own car and money in the bank, a master of his trade with more business than he can possibly handle, a distinguished-looking "engineer" suitably affianced, courteous, well-spoken, known for his "charm" and "impeccable manners," well-liked in a world filling up fast with malfunctioning washing machines and the money to pay the repair bills. But his belly is no less empty for that, and bread can't fill it.

Present facts and mere appearances notwithstanding, the determining reality of his life, compressed into image and metaphor, is locked in the smothering past—of the apprentice boy having scratched together some money and bought a 3-pound loaf of fresh-baked bread on the black market squatting "somewhere among the ruins" and secreted now in his lair breaking open the loaf and gobbling it "with my dirty hands, tearing off pieces and stuffing them into my mouth . . . sometimes it was still steaming, all warm inside, and for a few moments I had the sensation of holding a living creature in my hands, of tearing it to pieces. . . ." He hates the word "reasonable," a key word in the surrounding ethos, for he knows what it signifies by concealing in a world where "nothing is reasonable, and the price of bread is always a shade too high." Something soul-deep which he cannot understand or articulate is wrong: looking upon the face of the girl he adores, "for one insane moment" he feels an "urge to destroy" it; looking at his own face in the mirror he is "filled with rage and disgust" and shatters the image with a hammer. Surrounded by overflowing plenty in a pig's paradise of thick cream and bloated cakes he says: "I'm always afraid of famine."

The ruins of his city seem classical, timeless, they are simply *there* as if they had always been there, a permanent cityscape; they are presented as just that, ruins, like the Roman ruins in *Billiards,* which turn out to be fake, a tourist attraction based on sentimental appeal. But these are bombed-out ruins of course, spectral reminders of war that will eventually be demolished and replaced

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by the inevitable high-rise apartment complexes. Nor are they simply static; they are an emblem connecting recent past and ongoing future, monuments of moral history. Once, not long before, these ruins enclosed lives; now they are no more than raw materials awaiting plunder by enterprising businessmen. The plunder is called salvage—whatever bits and pieces which can be ripped out and turned to profitable account. The entrepreneur is his boss, his fiancée's father; together he and she have cheated the old man by selling scrap metal on the side—not Fendrich's first venture in free enterprise, as earlier, while still an apprentice, he had stolen hot plates to buy . . . bread and cigarettes. Scrap metal is scrap, after all, itself nonfunctional save as counters in commercial transactions which, though they are socially sanctioned, are nonetheless other forms of theft; but as the wreckers rise into the ruins' superstructure scrap assumes unsuspected shapes: completely intact bathrooms and kitchens with everything in place as in a still life. Not only boilers and ranges but every screw and hook, "hooks with towels still hanging on them, glass shelves still holding lipstick and razor side by side, bathtubs still full of bath water where the suds had sunk to the bottom in chalky flakes, clear water with rubber toys still floating in it, toys played with by children before they suffocated in the cellar . . . mirrors in which people had looked a few minutes before they died. . . ." But images do not cohere into idea; instead Fendrich, filled with inarticulate rage, pulls the bathtub plug, instead he destroys a perfectly good sewing machine frozen in the act of making a child's garment, instead he shatters his image in the mirror. An apprentice trying to salvage a washing machine falls to his death; it is left to Fendrich to carry the body to the hearse. A bystander asks, "Was he your brother?" "Yes, he was my brother," he replies.

That sentiment, or act of solidarity, is the other side of the coin: class hatred is the closest approach he makes to the articulation of a powerful, coherent, sustained emotion. The emotion isn't rooted in politics, much less ideology; it is deep, visceral, grounded in bread, in his beginnings and growth, the ore of his life, past, memories, experience. Böll's narrative method is scrupulously "objective," and the rhetoric and gestures of emotion are carefully suppressed. Fendrich is inexpressive, generally mute, apt to blot out feeling upon its first tentative appearance by deflecting his attention elsewhere. Feeling itself is ambiguous; except for class hatred which, originating in an animal sense of deprivation—of ravenous hunger, a great wracking emptiness—and swelling into a void of the spirit, now expands to a kind of moral criticism of the social order. Greed, meanness, petty cruelty, cold indifference, a single-minded pursuit of profit, the cost accountant's sense of life: this is the novel's vision, and Fendrich's, though he will record and absorb the moral substance without recourse to the abstract designations and their implications.

In the longest, most fully developed scene in a novel composed of fragments, images, aborted and buried scenes, Fendrich sits in a café with his fiancée for their final talk. Why? she asks. Does the girl have money? *That* she could understand, the universal motive underlying all act and feeling. Confusedly he tries to explain, and reminding her of meager rations doled out by her father comes close to saying bread is love: "And bread, the bread that you, that your father, never gave me . . . I believe . . . that if in those days you had just once given me a loaf of bread, I couldn't possibly be sitting here talking to you like this." Her sense of justice outraged, she points out that the wages her father paid exceeded the standard rate; and has he forgotten the ration-free soup served daily? Somehow Fendrich cannot feel gratitude for such largesse; and, not surprisingly, converts his rage into bread. In his high moment, when at last he breaks out of his silence, he speaks for all the workers: "Read the names again —out loud, reverently, like you'd read a litany—call them out, and after each name say: 'Forgive us'—then add up all the names, multiply the number by a thousand loaves of bread—and that result again by a thousand: then you'll have the number of curses heaped on your father's bank account. The unit is bread, the bread of those early years. . . ." A moment earlier, just before the rage explodes, he had told her: "And if there were such things as receipts for kisses, then I'm sure you'd have them all in a file." Matter of factly she informs him, "There are such things as receipts for kisses . . . and one day you'll see for yourself." (No doubt they're both right, in totally opposed, though irreconcilable ways.)

Hatred and rage drive speech; love, or whatever it is that he feels, silences him. Apart from his moment of lyricism, the speech is largely interior, unless the imagery of memory is a kind of mute eloquence. What Böll intends he impressively achieves: an expressionist portrait (the reader—this reader anyway—keeps remembering German painting, graphics, photomontage of the 1920s and early 1930s, Germany in a state of dissolution preparing for its Savior) a portrait in grays, browns, blacks and blood—a portrait weighted with heavy moral overtones of a society from which anything might erupt. The atmosphere is unrelievedly bleak and obscurely ominous, a "miracle" that feels more like an awful curse. Fendrich is a Mass-going Roman Catholic, a penitent in need of absolution; a recurring element with the gravity of a motif, and so orchestrated. A novel, small in scope but carefully wrought, dense and fraught in its atmospherics, heavily laden, the minor work of an imposing novelist, and in its deepest currents a preparation for the more massive work which was to follow and which, one hopes, is yet to come. □

Calvino Before the Fantasies

THE PATH TO THE NEST OF SPIDERS. *By Italo Calvino. Translated from the Italian by Archibald Colquhoun. The Ecco Press. 145 pp. Paper. $3.95.*

THOMAS J. ROBERTS

The stories of Italo Calvino are beginning to intrigue Americans. How did we come upon him? A not wholly atypical history of one American reader's somewhat skeptical involvement with Calvino marks out a chancy and meandering curve.

A reliable friend insisted that he read *Invisible Cities*, but that happened not to be available so he settled for *Cosmicomics*. This introduced him to Qfwfq, who told wonderfully funny stories about the days when the moon was closer to the earth, about the return to the oceans of certain mammals, about the creation of the universe from a monobloc, and so forth. Each prefaced with some scientific theory in précis, the stories developed the kind of nuttiness Americans associate with the comic strips of the days when *Krazy Kat* was king. Further—and most improbably—Calvino managed to transform this scientific seriousness *cum* Popcult nuttiness into evocations of ancient

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myths: his story of the explosion of the monobloc emerged as an Epicurean lament for the loss of Venus—a love which had once held the cosmos in unity. To blend a powerful scientific theory with a powerful myth and to present this in the costume of comic-strip farce: a third-rate writer would not even try to do that. Still, that not wholly atypical American never did finish the book.

He impatiently began reading *t zero* instead, which had more of Qfwfq's stories and some other short pieces that extended the explorations begun in *Cosmicomics*. He found himself deeply interested, but he never did finish *t zero* either. These were short-story collections so it was not quite like leaving *Gravity's Rainbow* unread, but he was vaguely bothered. Perhaps the fun was coming from Calvino's story ideas rather than from the stories themselves. One can waste a lot of time with writers who are at their best in their notebooks.

Invisible Cities dazzled him. Marco Polo was describing to Kublai Khan the fantastic cities he had seen on his trip to China—or perhaps he had only dreamed that he had seen them? or perhaps it was a single city he had seen in many different ways? Calvino had gone beyond the *ficciónes* of Jórge Luis Borges, and the reader had not managed to find anyone else clever enough to do this; but that reader was now becoming deeply suspicious, for he did not complete *Invisible Cities* either. He had noticed that when he was recommending Calvino to friends he was using the words *brilliant* and *dazzling*, and the truth is that he was beginning to grow weary of the brilliance he found in the pages of Nabokov and Barthelme and Mailer. No one seemed to use the word *brilliant* to describe the classic writers who managed always to keep pace with the human race in its headlong race to wherever. Who had ever claimed that the *Illiad* and *Lear* were "brilliant"? Who described Jane Austen and Shakespeare and Tolstoy and Milton as "brilliant"?

Calvino was inventing new games and playing them brilliantly; they were not simple, and the reader was not sure he was willing to yield his whole trust and mind to them. He was playing dozens of verbal games already, and there were hundreds more that he might play: he did not play chess "seriously," or bridge, and the solemn announcement that a new writer is playing new games with words no longer had the power to move him that it once had. He could look back on decades of abandoned literary enthusiasms and say, "I have loved too quickly, I have loved too well."

The reader needed evidence that Calvino was capable of thought, and he was to find it in "The Watcher." There were no games in this story. It presented the thoughts of a leftist assigned as observer to a polling place in a Catholic hospital for freaks: the crippled, the ugly, the mentally retarded, the deeply and permanently disturbed. Few of these men and women have known any life outside the hospital—which is to say, outside the caring and shaping arms of the Church. For him the Church has always stood immovably against any change that will bring Italy closer to human decency, but now he must admit that it has been silently caring for people he had not wanted to admit existed. He must cope with the revulsion he feels at having to look at these people, and he must ask himself seriously when someone shall be recognized as human and allowed to participate in decisions being made about his future. The watcher suffers no blinding conversions, makes no sudden retreat to his own slogans. He—and the reader—experience a slow-motion epiphany that brings back to their minds the reality hidden behind those necessarily simplistic slogans we use as battle flags. This story proved to the reader that Calvino is in fact a deeply thoughtful man.

Perhaps Calvino has one of those brains that turn to verbal play only when they become weary. I do not think so. *Cosmicomics* and *t zero* and *Invisible Cities* leave afterimages, and those afterimages persist in the mind with the stubbornness shown by those odd facts, proverbs, formulas, and paradigms that one fastens on in the stupid conviction that some day they will be useful. Not knowing when, not knowing how, but knowing with certainty that they will eventually be used.

The typical Italian reader read Calvino's stories as they appeared, but Americans read the stories as they are translated and have had great difficulty finding them. The cacophony of praise and blame reviewers impose upon us is deafening. Every book is Important, every book is a Disgrace. The people who follow contemporary fiction with the same strange passion that Boston, say, reserves for the Bruins, know about Calvino, but they do not always speak effectively to the rest of us. I have sketched the background of blunderings and inadequacies and of enthusiasms and suspicions evolving into deep—if still wary—respect because other readers must have had some such history and because our interest in Calvino's later work makes reading *The Path to the Nest of Spiders* in 1974 wholly different from what it would have been in 1947 (when it was first published) or even in 1957 (when Colquhoun's translation first appeared).

This is Calvino's first novel, one tells oneself. It could prove a better invention than anything he has done since. (A dozen writers could be cited—Maugham, for instance—whose first work is all that is worth keeping in print.) And this is "early Calvino." Will we see in the face behind this story the face we see today?

The Path to the Nest of Spiders is a story about the Italian resistance movement in the closing days of the 1939-45 war as it would have appeared to a

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child. Calvino is answering postwar Italian critics of the movement by showing that Italy owed even the most selfish, incompetent, and disagreeable of those fighters a debt of honor. (He explains this in a preface, but we would not have needed that explanation, I think.) The novel is in the neo-realistic mode reminiscent of films like *Bicycle Thief* and *Shoeshine*, and by the time I had finished three pages I had gone into a culture-shock that deflected my attention from both Calvino and the story. I could not believe I had once read stories like this and sought out those films with the conviction that at last I was getting back to reality. It had seemed courageous, then, for men to write like this and it took something like courage for us to confront such work. Today, I noted that Calvino had chosen to make his child-observer the brother of a slum-alley whore and I was appalled—at the cynicism I felt now, at the naiveté I had then.

Those time-bound conventions began to seem natural after a few pages, but it was Calvino I was watching rather than his characters. Would I have guessed in 1947 that the writer of *The Path to the Nest of Spiders* would later write *Invisible Cities* and *t zero*? Not for an instant. Yet the Calvino we know today is shadowily present in that younger man. Here is the child Pin unhappily reflecting on the mysterious ways of adults:

> Grown-ups are an untrustworthy treacherous lot, they don't take their games in the serious wholehearted way children do, and their own games are so complicated and involved that it's difficult to discover what the real one is.

The adults Pin watches are not all playing games, however. Their violence, their intrigues, their intensely patterned behavior are generated by sexual hungers and political theories the child cannot understand. Politics and love are games only to those who do not care what happens after their side wins. The resistance movement did care.

The Path to the Nest of Spiders is a thoughtful answer to postwar backlash against the movement, and the argument has a certain elegance. The unit Calvino invents for Pin to join includes individual fighters so disoriented that they would have fought with equal passion in the uniforms of its enemy. Nevertheless—as he points out through his spokesman, Kim—their blind energies do contribute to the goals of the movement. The movement did have a noble purpose, even if they did not.

It was Kipling's Kim who played the Great Game of espionage in British India, and it is the minor character bearing his name who will most interest the reader of *The Path to the Nest of Spiders* in 1977. Kim perceives reality and questions himself in the manner of the Calvino we know: "But, after all, is this only a struggle between symbols? Must a man, to kill a German, think not of that German but of something else, with a substitution which is enough to turn his brain? Must everything and everybody become a Chinese shadow-play, a myth?" One could write a long, unnecessary book on Calvino's mind with this passage as epigraph.

What we readers come to suspect, of course, is that just as Pin looks with only vague comprehension at the machinations of the violent, sex-driven adults in his alley and at the maneuvers and killing of the resistance fighters—so we who read the later works have only a dim comprehension of what is ultimately at stake: what is to be gained or lost by Calvino's risking. The nests in the title of this first novel are spider nests Pin has found for himself—cunning little tunnels with doors and traps that no one else knows about—and it is this labyrinth whose secret he will share with the person who finally proves a true friend. I shall resist the impulse to draw the analogy between Pin and Calvino, the true friend and the reader, the spiders' nests and the labyrinths of the writer's later work.

Beneath Calvino's cleverness, there is a fine, honest mind in fullest possession of itself in those later stories we awkwardly call fantasies (which I *have* now finished and am rereading). *The Path to the Nest of Spiders* does not have the power of these fantasies, but it is a novel anyone can enjoy: it has a special importance to those of us who have already taken an interest in one of the really good minds in Europe today. □

Beckett Piece by Piece

ENDS AND ODDS: Dramatic Pieces. *By Samuel Beckett. Grove Press. 128 pp. $6.95. Paper $1.95.*

FIZZLES. *By Samuel Beckett. Grove Press. 61 pp. $6.95. Paper $1.95.*

I CAN'T GO ON, I'LL GO ON: A Selection from Samuel Beckett's Work. *Edited by Richard W. Seaver. Grove Press. 621 pp. $15.*

SAMUEL BECKETT AND THE PESSIMISTIC TRADITION. *By Steven J. Rosen. Rutgers University Press. 252 pp. $12.50.*

J. D. O'HARA

In English the Irish are the great sentimentalists. The dour Scots, the babbling Welsh, and the destiny-laden English are not in it for sheer heart-wringing sentiment, the chuckle that stops short in a sob, the tear in the sparkling eye. Pause now for an ad hoc definition: sentimentality emphasizes not the racking passions—snarling hatred, implacable resentment, love that makes the heart leap in its bone-cage—no, not those, but the retrospective melancholy of sweet love lost, life's intensity cooled, chances missed and the road not taken, the living backwards with one's wet eye fixed on what might have been, with the absurd conviction that what can never come again was unutterably valuable . . . ah there! and ah then! Paradise lost, in short, with the addition offered by Samuel Beckett, that the *only* true paradise is the paradise that has been lost.

In art, especially in Irish art, as in life, the signs of sentimentality are easy to read: the dying fall and the fragmented speech; the gesture halfhearted and abortive, as when the arms that reached out briefly toward another return to hug the self; the tale set in the past and told with the brevity of a foreknown defeat, reaching no climax, fizzling out. . . . As Ossian sang, "They went forth to battle, but they always fell." No one recently has chronicled this post-Finnegan fall better than Samuel Beckett.

There is no intention here to sell sentimentality short. Not only is it a valid basis for grasping at life's fleeting feelings while avoiding its traumatizing horrors but, more to the point, it is capable of generating remarkably enjoyable art. For most of his literary life Beckett has performed rigadoons, pavanes, and dances of death over his touching themes. Like Jackson Pollock on canvas, Beckett has overlaid his texts and textures with all the glitter of Irish wit, Celtic theology, European literature, and Catholic philosophy, *inter alia*. But the paint thinned to a trickle with the last words of the last novel of his immensely impressive trilogy: "I can't go on, I'll go on." In one more novel, *How It Is*, and in handfuls of smaller texts, Beckett did indeed attempt

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to go on with his old themes—the isolated self, the mental being in a physical world, the irrelevance of knowledge, the evasiveness of identity, the absence of objective truth, the meaningless patterns of our eternal recurrences—but he stripped his investigation of its previous baroque complexities, whittled it down to the bare bones of immediate experience, and still found himself, and still finds himself, at the threshold, only beginning to end.

Meanwhile a new set of more explicitly emotional themes had begun to orchestrate themselves. In due time scholars will probably fix its official overture by triangulating Beckett's postwar visit to his dying mother in Ireland, his play *Krapp's Last Tape*, and his curious French poem "Mort de A.D." (who didn't die). Here as throughout the canon, Deirdre Bair's forthcoming biography will be essential. Until all this is clarified we can only note that in the many plays and short fictions of Beckett's later years the dominant themes are regret, remorse, inescapable loneliness, lost love, and wasted life. That voice in the protagonist's head is not now occupied in bullying him or her about identity, meaning, or duty; instead it voices the *agenbite of inwit*. But not gnawing about great sins committed or great deeds botched: Beckett's themes, more obviously than before, are those of sentimentality, of paradise lost or missed out on. The Beckett who once performed such mental gymnastics to prove that happiness is impossible now creates character after character who regrets what might after all have been, or who is inconsolable about a life to which no lasting happiness has come. The essence of this new complex is evoked in one of his present fizzles, a short piece entitled "Still." It consists basically of one described movement in which a character seated and staring fixedly out a window at the dying day raises one hand and rests his face in it. But Beckett's dry, minimally concerned narrative voice describes this gesture with preternatural concern, breaking it down into split-second sequences as a moving-picture film would do; and this intense focus on the emotional significance of a detached, momentary gesture evokes sentimentality at its finest—the quintessence, one suspects, of dozens of Victorian engravings.

Like most writers unwilling to do the same thing over and over, Beckett has written much more than he has published or even finished. Like most writers who concentrate on the essence of a theme rather than its complexity, Beckett has found himself writing increasingly briefer and more condensed works in recent years. He is concerned with situations, not with the problems and resolutions that constitute plot. As a result his fictions have come to resemble prose poems, and his plays approach *tableaux vivants*. In both forms motion takes on the character of musical theme rather than goal-oriented action; repetition is basic to it, a repetition characteristically stopped short in favor of the final silence to which Beckett so often calls our attention. His two present collections, the theatre pieces of *Ends and Odds* and the abandoned prose *Fizzles*, demonstrate all these qualities, though some of them remind us also of the drawn out dying of his earlier concerns.

Most of the fizzles were written first in French and published first as *Foirades*. For the most part they are abortive attempts, stories that never got off the ground (Beckett's harsher unofficial title was "Shit"), and they show him attempting to get plots underway, to find a satisfactory third-person narrative voice, to develop obstinately static situations. Perhaps the most interesting is the eighth and last, "For to end yet again." As the title suggests, this is written (as translated from the French) in a curious mélange of deliberate bad styles—imperfectly Englished French, a clumsy translation as of Dante, unsatisfactorily punctuated dull statement—a mélange that demonstrates the extremes to which Beckett will go in attempting to remake and flatten language. It doesn't work here: attempting to sidestep rhetoric, it calls too much attention to itself; and its content, one of Beckett's several recent dream landscapes, seems equally arbitrary—dwarfs carrying a litter, a character turned to stone on a dust-filled plain—the bleak surrealism of the 1920s. Another fizzle, startling because the narrator admits to happiness, provides a fine illustration of the sentimental mode: "Happiness, what happiness, but what deaths, what loves, I knew at the time, it was too late then. Ah to love at your last and see them at theirs, the last minute loved ones, and be happy, why ah, uncalled for." See how each sentence ends with a passage that turns back on the previous admissions of feeling and feigns to undercut them—but of course the reader's sympathetic emotion is simply complicated, not undone.

Since they really are what they claim to be, the publication of the fizzles is puzzling, but the eight stage and radio plays of *Ends and Odds* need little excuse. The Odds, described as "Roughs for Theatre and Radio," are untitled and on the whole unsatisfactory, and they include some curious revivals of Beckett's strange interest in those vaguely official scribes, detectives, and enforcers

Will senior citizens seize too much power?

The idea that senior citizens might, some day in the foreseeable future, become the most powerful political force in society and use that power to exploit youth is an idea that has been seriously voiced by some social observers.

In **THE GRAY LOBBY** Henry J. Pratt, who does not share this view of old-age menace, traces the history of the growth of political influence among the aging that has been striking enough to make such an idea conceivable.

Pratt analyzes the pension movement from 1922 to 1935 which culminated in Social Security legislation. He then shows how growing collective awareness and resentment of a poverty-ridden isolation from the rest of society brought into being a series of groups to agitate for legislation to relieve their plight. In 1967, federal spending on old-age programs was $25 billion; in 1972 it was $229 billion. Pratt tells how this came about not because of "clout" but because the leaders of the senior citizens groups learned to present their legitimate grievances in a manner acceptable to politicians and to link their demands to those of the larger society.

THE GRAY LOBBY has implications beyond its immediate concern. It is a case-study of the functioning of public policy and how it can be made responsive to the needs of private citizens.

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ISLAND CITY

Green corn stalks rustle
beginning to dry
on a hill above the sea

—

Pile of box houses
with wires on every side
and box voices and box dogs

—

Around a corner
somebody who's a city
pounds all day on a tin door

—

Only two houses away
a neighbor
is a piano playing

—

A breeze through the house
and one fly rushes
from window to window

—

Morning noon and evening
the old woman turns on the sprinkler
and watches

—

The landlord's children
lock up their dog
and shout at it

—

Living it up
in the afternoon
at the shopping center

—

Under the traffic light
silent paper boy
watches the cars

—

Whole crowd nosing
for shade for the baby
while they go fishing

Backs in a row at the sea's edge
bow late in the day
hooking tiny fish

—

Little girl's belly
old man's belly
a sail on the horizon

—

Old dog under a bush
head on his paws
watches waves climb the sand

—

All the guests in the neighbor's garden
ask where the neighbors will go
now he's retiring

—

Toward the sea
wings of flies flash
with sunset

—

Suddenly wrinkles appear
on the water
and then are gone again

—

Going away over water
a cloud
from a cloud

—

So many lives in the evening
staring at the one
program

—

When his television
is off
the neighbor can't stop coughing

—

As I grow older
the cities spread
over the earth

—

A tree stirs
and the curtain
draws back from the window

Ward of unlit terraces
the hour of night barks
and echoes

—

At night the autumn mist
arrives and arrives in silence
but the eaves drip through the dark

—

Sound of late tires carries
from an unseen street
through cool leaves

—

It isn't the moon
but the city reflected
from the house fronts on the hill

—

One cricket starts up
in the still moonlight
and wakes the refrigerator

—

Rain from the full moon
all at once washes away
deep dust

—

By the setting moon
a rat runs
on the dry leaves of the woodrose

—

Sleeping I saw the new moon
through the open window
of an unknown kitchen

—

Lizard clacks at daybreak
in the dark of mango trees
when the morning star is alone

—

Packing again
to the sound
of autumn rain

W. S. Merwin

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(cf. Krim, Kram, Gaber, Youdi, and the Obidil) who from time to time lend a depressing air of Chesterton or Graham Greene to his writing. But in three of the Ends, *Not I*, *That Time*, and *Footfalls*, the collection offers some of Beckett's finest dramatic work. In each, the mind divided against itself expresses life at a dead end, existence aborted, the sense—to which Beckett has turned so often in his later works—that one has never really been born. "Never the time and the place and the loved one all together," Browning wrote; never a consummation of life. Beckett is quick to add that even if the occasion should offer, we are likely to be looking away, and that even if the consummation should improbably occur, we should still be obliged to live beyond it for many an endless year. Such stipulations lie at the melancholy heart of the sentimental experience, and these plays, brief and even dry as they appear on the page, can wring that heart painfully, as many theatregoers have already testified.

To describe them is to be misleading. In one, a mouth talks while a hooded figure listens and makes a few brief, minimal gestures. In another, a white-haired head listens as three versions of his own voice recall a largely painful past; then there is a toothless smile. In the third, a woman paces back and forth. A quarter-century ago, before *Waiting for Godot* sophisticated us, such drastically lopped theatre and such brief plays would have seemed comic or irritating. Now, if anything, we tend to find the world in a grain of sand. These plays are not tragic, though they have been called so; tragedies deal with a much wider compass of significance, much deeper confrontations with existence. But these are marvelous sentimentality, worth any theatregoer's hushed attention.

Attention must be paid to this man, and the scholars are busy night and day. Beckett is the most written about of all living writers, and to pick out of the shelves of recent analysis and interpretation any one text must seem an arbitrary act. But plain sentimentality is intolerable, as any collection of Irish songs amply demonstrates, and S. J. Rosen's reminder of the pessimistic philosophers on whom Beckett has drawn, and the optimistic ones whom he has parodied, is valuable to any student of Beckett's ideas. Rosen's survey of these philosophers is fine, and garnished with delightful quotations. (A current favorite, from Schopenhauer: "The pleasure in this world, it has been said, outweighs the pain; or at any rate there is an even balance between the two. If the reader wishes to see whether this is true, let him compare the respective feelings of two animals, one of whom is engaged in eating the other.") But Rosen's application of the philosophy to Beckett's texts, and his extraction of ideas from those texts, cannot be praised. He takes *Proust* (1931), of all Beckett's texts, as his primary topic; he repeatedly misses the point of the passages that he discusses; he finds recurrently in Beckett "a sadistic relish of man's suffering"; and he is constitutionally incapable of quoting Beckett's texts accurately. An exasperating book.

Exasperating in other ways is the anthology *I Can't Go On, I'll Go On*. It contains a substantial amount of Beckett from "Dante and the Lobster" (1932) through *Not I* and *That Time*, but it contains only bits and pieces of the novels (nothing at all from *Malone Dies*) and a scattering of the short fictions. It is introduced with a lively personal introduction, and various sections of the anthology have equally lively introductory comments; but the introduction—which draws often and without acknowledgment on an unpublished dissertation—is riddled with errors, and so are the later remarks. On the whole, the Beckett reader would be well advised to invest in the many individual collections, bit by bit. Why take a shortcut when the main road is so attractive? □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

No country today seems more honestly represented by its playwrights than England. Their reports are by no means complete, but the attempt to reflect the "state of the nation" is often theatrically adept as well as humanly forthright. I refer not only to the generation of the late 1950s and early 1960s: Osborne, Pinter, John Arden, Arnold Wesker, Ann Jellicoe, Henry Livings, Keith Waterhouse; but to more recent men: Edward Bond, David Rudkin, Joe Orton, David Storey, Trevor Griffiths and Simon Gray whose *Butley* and now *Otherwise Engaged* (Plymouth Theatre) brings the list more or less up to date. (Tom Stoppard occupies a special niche.)

The report is definitely "negative": the colors range from a murky gray to black amid flashes of abrasive laughter. It is right that this should be so. England is not a happy country; it is in economic and spiritual disarray. There is sanity in revealing the facts.

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CONTEST FOR NEW POETS

"Discovery—THE NATION, '77" has been opened jointly by The Poetry Center of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA in New York City and THE NATION. The competition, now in its third year, represents a fusion of The Poetry Center's "Discovery" contest and THE NATION's poetry prize. It is designed to attract larger audiences for young poets through the combined media of publication and poetry recital.

Winners of the 1976 contest were Philip Schultz, Mary Swander, Jane Teller and Ellen Bryant Voigt. They gave a group reading at The Poetry Center on May 3, and their poems appeared in THE NATION of May 1.

Contest Information:

OPEN to poets whose work has not yet been published in book form. Book form includes chapbooks (small editions) and self-published books.

REQUIREMENTS: Ten poems (not more than 500 lines) of original poetry in English are to be submitted.

THE AWARDS: Each of the four winners will receive an honorarium of $50 and will be invited to read at The Poetry Center on Monday, May 2, 1977. Each winner will have one previously unpublished poem printed in THE NATION magazine.

MANUSCRIPT DETAILS: Submit four complete sets of the ten poems, each set securely fastened. Your name, biographical information and information indicating whether a particular poem has been published should not appear on the poems. Instead, a separate cover page should include your name, address and phone number. Manuscripts will not be returned, so please retain a copy of your submission. THE NATION reserves the right to publish at its regular rates any previously unpublished poems.

JUDGING will take place in April; winners will be chosen by judges whose names will be announced after the contest is over.

DEADLINE for receipt of poems: February 25, 1977.

SEND ALL ENTRIES TO: The Poetry Center of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA, 1395 Lexington Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10028. (212) 427-6000. Direct inquiries to Betsy Dunn, Assistant to the Director, The Poetry Center.

Simon Gray is both the most forthright and the most equivocal of the playwrights named. There is in Edward Bond a pained and savage indignation, in David Storey (*The Contractor, The Changing Room, Home*) compassion, in David Rudkin (*Ashes*) a grim determination to persist and hold on. Simon Gray displays a grin that masks something not far from disgust and perhaps a narcotized hate.

Most of our reviewers have found both *Butley* and the present *Otherwise Engaged*—funny. That's good for the box office. The English also laugh at Gray's work because the poison in his plays draws off some of their own venom and thus possesses the properties of an antidote. They also see irony and even a certain pathos, if not exactly commiseration, in Gray's picture. I find hopelessness and something close to complaisance in it. Gray seems to be very much part of what he mocks. He grins as he spews the toxic matter within him. I refuse to swallow it.

Otherwise Engaged (which won a prize in London as the "best play of the season") is deftly written with that facility in adroit bitchiness of which many young Englishmen have become masters. It contains sharp quips, gracefully worded snarls of contempt, self-vilification and outright malice. The play is certainly effective; we are caught up by clever jabs that elicit a gasp of amused surprise before we wince and gag at the thrust.

Butley taught English; the Simon of *Otherwise Engaged* is a successful publisher of nearly 40. As he prepares to listen in calm solitude to a recording of *Parsifal*, he is interrupted by a series of intruders. One is a shabby young man to whom Simon has rented a flat in his house. The fellow doesn't pay his rent, borrows money for liquor and girls, cadges whatever else he can from his "landlord," envies and resents him. The lout calls himself a sociology student but one sees at once that he is totally ignorant of that, or any, subject. So much for the radical younger generation!

Simon's brother, Stephen, a graduate of one of the red brick universities, now an embittered schoolteacher with a large family, suffers a sense of inferiority induced by the class arrogance of the Oxford-Cambridge clan. He has never risen above a drab mediocrity in his career, for he has neither the brilliance nor the material ease of his brother. Still another visitor is Jeff, a drunken, boorish, derisively "superior" critic, given to womanizing in indiscriminate confusion. He proclaims his thoroughgoing Englishness, professes discomfort with foreigners, and curses England because it is done for, *finished*.

Enter a woman writer (she once had an affair with Stephen) who in an effort to get Simon to publish her book bares her breasts. An old secondary schoolmate phones up; after reminding Simon of the homosexual escapades of their boyhood days, he tries to find out if Simon has layed his fiancée. (He did—once.) The man threatens suicide over the phone; we never learn if he goes through with it, because Simon cuts him off: he doesn't wish to know.

Simon's wife has been unfaithful. He has known this from the outset and done nothing about it. What good would it do if he made a fuss? He is willing to go on with their marriage as if everything were normal—it *is* normal in this environment—and is only slightly shaken when his wife tells him she is pregnant, but is uncertain whether by Simon or by her lover.

Simon's "virtue" is that he remains unruffled through all this. He is a snob about everything—especially the use of the English language—and is unfailingly well-mannered. He takes life as it comes, and it comes rough and dirty. As the play ends we see him going back to dosing himself with Wagner. I found him, for all his forbearance, which is hardly more than decorous cynicism, the most obnoxious personage of the lot. Is he meant to be the butt of the author's anger or dismay? Simon Gray will not say: he is writing a play, an entertainment. The "verdict" is up to us.

This is not "objectivity." The fact is I don't believe any of it, even though it may be said "to hold the mirror up to nature." That such people exist, even that they may be common in certain "sophisticated" English circles (and elsewhere), I have no doubt. But the detail of their behavior is not the truth about them, nor is the author's imperturbability in presenting them an artistic merit. There is always something more to be conveyed about stupid or corrupt people than evidence of their stupidity and corruption. The artist, in this case the dramatist, must not only display what we already know but impart a sense of his own attitude and, if it is not considered sentimental to say so, to allow us to look into his own heart and discover the values to which he is loyal. I discern little heart in *Othewise Engaged* and certainly no wisdom.

Tom Courtenay, who plays Simon, is an actor of quality. He was especially affecting in some of his early films,

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especially *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. There is something fey, hurt and bewildered about him. Perhaps this softening is an advantage in his present role, but it struck me as somewhat misplaced. The play's style requires a more cutting edge, for I am inclined to think its texture had best be kept superficial and glib. The shadow of real, though crushed, emotion in Courtenay emphasizes the play's essential hollowness.

The rest of the cast—especially John Horton as Simon's brother—is rather better than adequate, but I found Harold Pinter's direction strained and, in physical staging, almost ungainly. Greater fluency, even frivolity, would better suit the occasion. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Prince Bernhardt, Raul Castro, Chou En-lai, John Foster Dulles, Franco, Ho Chi Minh, Kissinger, Pompidou and Nelson Rockefeller are among the subjects of Leon Golub's recent unilateral portraits—unilateral because Golub has short-circuited the usual artist-sitter relationship, dispensing with his subjects' presence as he paints their countenances. The paintings can be seen at the Kelly Gallery, Chicago (until March 9) and the Olympia Galleries, Philadelphia (until March 6). The conjunction of serious painting and the power elite is an unexpected development. How did Golub come to it?

He had been working on the "Assassins," a series of big paintings of war in Vietnam. It occurred to him to paint President Ford because he, too, "looked like a soldier." This led him to paint Kissinger, though he does not look like a soldier: abruptly Golub was off the battlefield and into the executive suite. Between February and September 1976 he produced about sixty heads; or rather he kept sixty, the original number seems to have been higher. Corinne Robbins, the first critic to write about Golub's new paintings (*Arts Magazine*, February, 1977) called them "the faces of power."

The portraiture of leaders has usually been in the hands of the regime. The de' Medici, Gonzago, delle Rovere and d'Este families, for instance, commissioned their own records. The Hapsburg dynasty did no less, using Titian in the 16th and Velasquez in the 17th century. Naturally the iconography of such portraiture condoned and honored the values of those in power: the subject was the client. In the 19th century there was a split: official portraiture became increasingly routine, and intimate portraiture, for which the sitter is not a client but a friend, flourished. The paintings in which the artist controlled the sitter, and not the other way round, are the memorable portraits of the century.

In this situation, with artists and rulers separated, the basis for unofficial representation of public figures became caricature. Political cartoons as a means of instruction by image-making have lost their authority in the press of the West, though maintained as a specialist interest in, for example, *The New York Review of Books* and *The Nation*. The cartoon is a victim of photography, like newspaper artists' sketches of current events and the people of the day. News photographs are not just candid moments caught by chance (though they can be that), because public men dress and gesture to be photographed and editors select the pictures they print according to the projected image. Thus there is an element of imposture, of charade, as well as of physical reality in such photographs, and Golub appreciates both.

He proposes a portraiture of public figures that is neither adulation nor caricature. His stinging characterizations are not exaggerated; he does not depart from strict figural norms. His source is the universal photo file: *Time, Newsweek*, and the photo agencies (from which he rents material). He has access to the physiognomy of public men via photos, just as we do. This mutuality of information between painter and audience binds him to a faithful rendering of appearances. At the same time, because he can count on our recognition, he is free to play with the conventions of representation. Golub works with the photographic concept of a sensitized flat surface rather than with the empathic solid forms of Renaissance-derived paintings. Thus his close attention to grazing light on public skin is translated into a Morse code of probing brush marks, as stylized as trees in an architect's presentation drawing. The spots and lines on dry, unprimed canvas condense into the sagging and creasing of professionally mobile faces. Golub's schematization takes on a kind of impressionistic dazzle.

Politics is a profession in which seniority counts: aging is presumed to confer experience, if not wisdom. However

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Golub points to the devastating results of living long *and* living well: is that pink good health or fever? He has a shrewd eye for traces in the body of arrogance, intransigence, fanaticism or corruption. One does make one's own face. I realized this when I saw successive photographs of long-term convicts: it is not the eyes (they stay the same), but the rest of the face that we model for ourselves. Frowning, smiling, talking, grimacing—such actions shape the face in ways that externalize character. Golub reads his photographic sources to catch just those involuntary revelations of the voluntary muscles. The Renaissance view of a good old age was that it conferred dignity, learning and virtue. Golub has reached another conclusion, brilliantly stated in this pantheon of compromised and collapsing celebrities.

The heads of Oriental politicians (Ho, Chou) are treated differently from the Occidentals in whom the dual strains of aging and duplicity are clearly shown. The Orientals change but do not seem to run down; they are crystalline, perhaps because their photographers do not exercise or possess the right to be candid. For the present it is the West that arouses Golub's eloquence most fully. With Franco and Dulles, in particular, he states the public mask and impugns the character within. □

INDIGENOUS MUSIC/Nat Hentoff

Jazz musicians do not retire, it being impossible for them to separate their music from their lives since each night they redefine or further define who they are in what they play. Duke Ellington would react with genuine incomprehension when asked why he did not finally leave the road and enjoy the lush life on his ASCAP royalties. "Retire to what?," he would say. "Silence?"

During the past decade or so, however, it has not been easy to hear older jazz players on records because most companies focus on younger musicians, particularly "crossover" instrumentalists (those who craftily intertwine elements of rock with jazz, thereby appealing to young audiences). There are smaller labels specializing in the noncommercial avant-garde, but this too is habitually the province of the young.

Fortunately for jazzmen past 50, and their audiences of whatever age, Norman Granz has returned to the production of jazz albums (his Pablo label is distributed in this country by RCA.) At 58, Granz is economically in a position to record only what he likes. And the essence of what this jazz Medici likes is classic, swing-era improvising, extending to a few modernists such as Dizzy Gillespie.

A new Pablo release, *Basie Jam #2,* is a further indication of how important it is that Granz has returned, more or less *pro bono,* to the record business. I cannot think of another major label (and only a couple of minor ones) that would have assembled for a jam session a 72-year-old pianist (Count Basie), a 69-year-old saxophonist (Benny Carter), a 56-year-old trumpeter (Clark Terry), and two chronically underrated veteran swingers, trombonist Al Grey, (51) and tenor saxophonist "Lockjaw" Davis, (54).

This is by no means a self-consciously "historic" affair in which the elders of the tribe are applauded for echoes of past conquests. On the contrary, the session illuminates what these men are saying right now; and right now, each is more authoritative, more precisely passionate, and more rhythmically compelling than ever before. As in all jam sessions, the music takes the form of conversation. Jazzmen, particularly the older ones, like to trade stories on their instruments. As a young avant-garde trumpeter said recently, after listening to 66-year-old Roy Eldridge in a club, "It's not about playing time, he'd just be talking."

With Count Basie supplying the exact, spare punctuation—floating the rest of the rhythm section along with him—these robust jazz elders speak in wholly distinctive voices, having spent their lives making their horns extensions of their distinctive selves. Benny Carter, for instance, is the most gracefully urbane of all jazz alto saxophonists, but underneath the lithe elegance is a still youthful delight, akin to that of Artur Rubinstein, in the very act of sculpting music. When Rubinstein was asked a while ago for the secret of his tone, he said that it's a matter of "singing inside." I know of no better way to explain why Carter sounds as he does.

Complementing Carter's aristocratic lyricism is the earthy, sometimes blustery street wit of trombonist Al Grey. Also contrasting are trumpeter Clark Terry, a seemingly extrovert but actually quite complex storyteller; and Eddie Davis who exults in a huge tone and walloping beat that make him sound like a store-front preacher exploding in Sunday joy.

There will be more of these jam sessions under Basie's name, Norman Granz assures the faithful, because "I think the small group has been a long-neglected facet of Basie's, and I intend to explore it as fully as possible." A wise course, particularly since the Basie big band, while exciting for its sheer propulsive force, is more of a machine these years than a place where singular soloists can spin improvisatory tales. The small combo is where the elders of jazz are most rewardingly heard because the setting provides them with the space, uncluttered by orchestral manuscript paper, to conjugate their lives in interplay with peers of equally rich and resilient histories—as in *Basie Jam #2.* □

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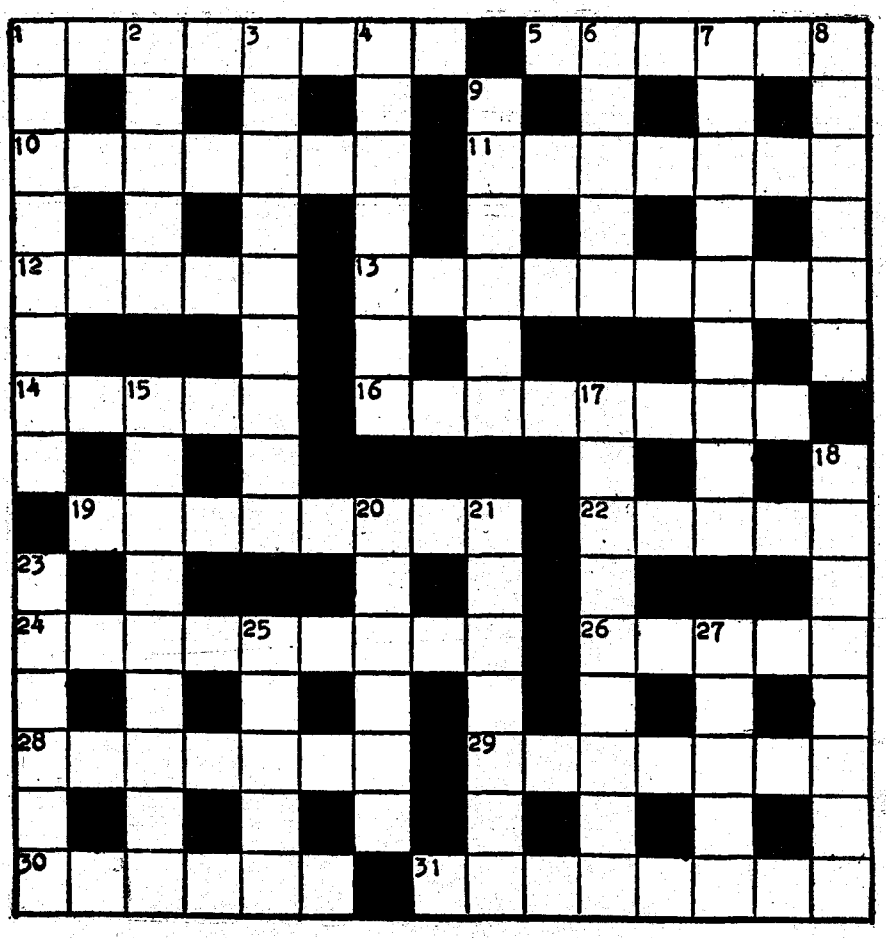
Crossword Puzzle No. 1667

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Discharge I force into place, returning near the sea. (8)
5 See 23 down.
10 It makes a fad seem out of place, and certainly doesn't improve the reputation. (7)
11 and 3 down It might follow a few introductory remarks by someone. (7,2,4,3)
12 Faithful, for example, in falsehood. (5)
13, 24 and 26 That's what one gets if one's 4 goes from white to black. (1,5,2,1,9,5)
14 The wrong article to pen indecent letters. (5)
16 German is supposed to be such a 5. (8)
19 Accidental cancellation by such? (8)
22 Live like Lucy? (5)
24 and 26 See 13
28 General explosion and blow-up. (7)
29 Obeys an order which is reputedly good for you. . . . (7)
30 . . . . and order sets my method. (6)
31 Characteristic of a condition that suggests an immoral running course. (8)

DOWN

1 A French girl composed part of the verse, evidently. (8)
2 Rob of one's weapon? (5)
3 See 11 across.
4 You probably wouldn't use it until it's broken. (7)
6 Carries out instructions when bad boys take direction to heart. (5)
7 Boasting such as a sage can do, perhaps. (9)
8 What those charms of song evidently did. (6)
9 You might find this sort up in young growth. (6)
15 Painters sometimes use these places for hanging. (9)
17 What's the matter? It couldn't be so rotten! (9)
18 Could he hold his malmsey? Quite the other way around! (8)
20 Want some tips? Copy the up-coming male and female, for example. (6)
21 Free from doubt. (7)
23 and 5 The language of summer? A fern is displayed by it. (6,6)
25 Mysterious point in the lake. (5)
27 To tell the truth, one doesn't stay put in a boat. (3,2)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1666

ACROSS: 1 Boardroom; 6 Petal; 9 Nemesis; 10 and 11 Washington; 12 Viable; 13 Meet; 15 Farewell; 16 Studio; 18 Naming; 23 Aunt; 24 Sappho; 25 Rag; 28 Tutored; 29 Address; 30 Cheap; 31 Generates. DOWN: 1 Benet; 2 Almoner; 3 Disavowing; 4 Obstacle; 5 Mowgli; 6 Post; 7 Tail-end; 8 Lights out; 14 A tall order; 17 Chaplain; 19 Manatee; 21 Garment; 22 Mad dog; 26 Gasps; 27, 20 and 15 down Trip the light fantastic.

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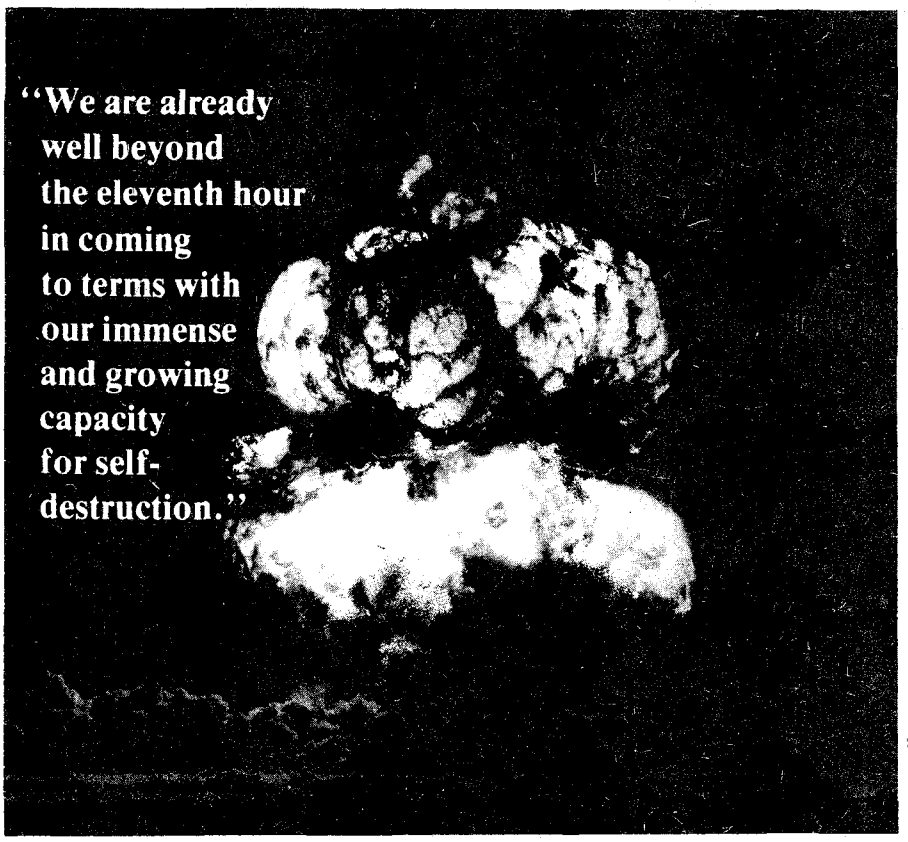

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